

THE
SCHOOL
FOR
WIDOWS.

VOLUME THE FIRST.



THE
S C H O O L
FOR
W, I D O W S.
A
N O V E L.
IN THREE VOLUMES.

By CLARA REEVE, *R*
AUTHOR OF THE OLD ENGLISH BARON,
&c. &c.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

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THE

S. C. H. O. L.

FOR

W. I. D. O. W. S.



IN THE MUSEUM

BY CLARA BERRY

REPRODUCED BY THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1891

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P R E F A C E.

AMONG the prodigious number of books that go under the denomination of NOVELS, the far greater number are only intended as the amusement of a vacant hour. Yet there are some that are written with a better design: namely, to counteract the poison of Fashion, Folly, and Dissipation; to blend together the *utile* and the *dulcé*; and to impress some moral inferences on the mind of the reader. These last, it is presumed, will always find patrons and protectors.

There has been among the Novel readers, of late years, a rage for SENTIMENT; in-somuch that Authors have thought it

necessary to recommend their works by this word—*Sentimental* Stories, *Sentimental* Plays, *Sentimental* Tales, *Sentimental* Journeys, &c.

This word, like many others, seems to have degenerated from it's original meaning: and, under this flimsy disguise, it has given rise to a great number of whining, maudlin stories, full of false sentiment and false delicacy, calculated to excite a kind of morbid sensibility, which is to faint under every ideal distress, and every fantastical trial; which have a tendency to weaken the mind, and to deprive it of those resources which Nature intended it should find within itself.

Thus young people enter into life, imbued with false notions and false sentiments: believing it meritorious to have this pretended sentimental turn; liable to a thousand

sand vexations and mortifications; and disarmed of that strength and fortitude which should encounter and vanquish them.

These sentimental people pretend to a more than common degree of tenderness and sensibility, which they carry to the most foolish and ridiculous excesses. There are some who think it a crime to destroy noxious vermin, reptiles, and insects; hornets and wasps, spiders, snails, and caterpillars.

A young girl, about seven years old, begged her mother not to hurt the poor little flea that hopped upon her frock—
“For you know, mamma, that we must not kill any thing!”

However ridiculous this story may seem, the fact is true. It deserves to be compared with that of a poor lady, whose sensibility was excited by the broken leg of an unfortunate wheelbarrow!

There is a sensibility that ennobles the heart that bears it. It is modest and secret; it never boasts itself, but enjoys it's pleasures, and endures it's pains, in the heart's recesses. It hates and abhors cruelty of every kind: it weeps with those that weep; but avoids all ostentatious display of it's feelings.

False sensibility, on the contrary, is always talking of itself: it complains of it's sufferings, in order to exalt it's merits; and wonders at the hardness and insensibility of others. Yet it is often seen that these very people will turn their backs upon the miseries of their fellow-creatures, and even practise the art of ingeniously tormenting them.

This false kind of sensibility arises from false sentiments: and they are either counterfeited for interested purposes; or, if they are real, they weaken the mind that indulges them.

them. It was a saying of Cato the Elder, "That a virtuous mind, struggling against misfortunes, was a spectacle that the gods beheld with pleasure and approbation."

Pictures of this kind should be held up to young people, and proposed as models of imitation. They should be encouraged to believe, that misfortunes are not invincible; that virtue will enable them to overcome all difficulties; and that such victories are subjects of honourable triumph: that virtue is active, and gathers strength from exercise; and that indolence frustrates its own expectations.

The fable of Hercules and the Countryman is a good illustration of this subject—

When his waggon was stuck fast in the mire, he kept praying incessantly to Hercules, but never once offered to exert his own strength to help himself.

“Leave off calling upon me,” says Hercules; “put forth all your strength, to lift up your waggon. When you have done your utmost, I will come to your assistance.”

With this moral in view, I have written the following work; which motive, I hope, will be deemed a sufficient claim to candour and allowance, if it should not be found worthy of a warmer plaudit.

It is written more to the heart than the head. It is addressed to the Virtuous and Candid, to whom I consign it's final destiny.

THE

THE
S C H O O L
FOR
W I D O W S.

LETTER I.

MRS. STRICTLAND, TO MRS. DARNFORD.

IF Frances Darnford remembers her schoolfellow Rachel Selwyn, she will acknowledge a friend in Rachel Strictland, though she has not been permitted to converse with her under that name. She must have heard that Rachel had changed her name several months before her; but Rachel knew not that her beloved Fanny was married till above a year afterward.

Long have I been separated from all

A 6

those

those whom I called my friends; but, at length, Heaven allows us to be united. Banished from society for near ten years, I am restored to my liberty by the death of my husband; an awful and important event, but not greatly deplored by me. Heaven knows what is best for us! I know not *seemings*; I disclaim them.

After being the slave and prisoner of a tyrant for ten years, I feel as does the captive just delivered from his chains. It would be folly, it would be sinful, in me, to affect the part of a disconsolate widow.

The first use I made of my recovered liberty, was to enquire after the friends of my youth. One of my guardians was dead; the other was removed to a distant county. My young friends were dispersed here and there, and out of my reach.

I met a gentleman who knew your family; and I enquired after every part of it, particularly the person in it the most
dear

dear to me. He told me briefly all that he knew of it—

“Mary Lawson is married to a tradesman in London. Jane is married to an attorney, Mr. Jones, who succeeded her father.”

“Tell me what is become of Frances? it is her that I am the most desirous to hear of.”

“She was married to a Mr. Darnford, who was said to be a man of good fortune; but he ran through it all in a few years, and then died. All that remained of his estate was entailed on the next male heir of the name; and the widow was left without any provision, and obliged to go out as governess to some young ladies.”

“Well, but what became of her ever since?”

“Why, that we do not know exactly. It was said that she kept a school at W——, and took in needlework beside; but I know nothing certainly.”

“Can

“Can you tell me who knows more?”

“Perhaps her sisters may.”

“That is true; but, where are they to be found?”

“Mrs. Jones lives at N——.”

“I thank you, Sir, for this information.”

It was a person formerly a clerk to your father who gave me this imperfect account; and he seemed not to know, or care to know, any more.

A few days after, I put myself into a post-chaise, and went to N——.

Mrs. Jones received me graciously, when she thought I came to visit her; but, as soon as she found I only came to enquire after you, she grew stiff and reserved.

I urged her to tell me all she knew. She said, she knew very little more. I begged her to tell me that little.

“Why, really, Madam, it gives me pain to speak of Mrs. Daraford. She was weak enough to give up her settlement, and so reduced

reduced herself to poverty and distress. After trying to get a maintenance in several ways, she set up a day-school at the town of W——. She lodged with a carpenter's widow, who let her have part of her house. She taught her daughters, and made them capable of assisting her in her school. After some time, she succeeded; and I was told she made it out very well, and I was glad to hear it."

"Good God!" said I, "this a situation for Fanny's sister to be glad of!"

I said this inwardly, as you may suppose.

"Well, Madam, Mrs. Darnford is there still, I suppose?"

"I believe not, Madam. About two years ago, she left W——, where she was well established; and went a wild-goose chase, nobody knows where. It is said she is engaged in a strange undertaking; that she lives in a *haunted house*, and takes care of a *mad woman*, whose husband is
gone

gone abroad, and has left his house and his wife to the care of Mrs. Darnford. This is the last account, and this is all that I can tell you of her."

"Very strange, indeed!—But where is this haunted house to be found?"

"Indeed, I do not know: I never hear from her."

"Does any body else know more of her?"

"Mrs. Martin, her landlady, at W—, is the most likely to know; for I am told that she took one of her daughters away with her, and I suppose she may hear from her sometimes."

"I suppose so too; for I hope there are few people that neither know nor care what becomes of their nearest relations!"

"You might have spared that reproach, Madam. The cares of my own family are quite sufficient for me. Mrs. Darnford never writes to any of her relations."

"I dare

“ I dare say she has good reasons for what she does, and what she does not.”

“ Perhaps so, Madam. You were always partial to her, and now would justify her conduct at every one’s expence.—I have answered your questions, and I can tell you nothing more.”

“ I thank you, Madam; I have nothing farther to ask. I will seek out your sister: I will endeavour to be of service to her; and will do the office of a friend, though I am not her relation. Only tell me the name of the person with whom she lived at W——.”

I wrote Mrs. Martin’s name and place of abode; and then took my leave of Mrs. Jones, who was heartily glad to be rid of me.

I ate and slept at the inn where the horses were put up; and the next morning I set off for W——, resolving not to return home till I had obtained more certain intelligence of you.

I slept

I slept another night upon the road, and got to W—— by one o'clock. I took an early dinner. The landlady of the White Hart, a sensible and intelligent woman, informed me where Mrs. Martin lived, and sent her servant to shew me the way to her house.

I enquired for her; and was conducted through a neat shop, and into a large back parlour, where sat the good woman in the midst of thirty children, all neatly dressed and well behaved.

At my entrance, they all rose up. I apologized for intruding upon them. I said—
“ My business is to enquire after a dear friend and schoolfellow of mine, who is also a friend of yours, Mrs. Martin. Her name is Darnford. I am told you are the most likely person to give me some account of her.”

“ Mrs. Darnford, did you say?—Yes; she is my friend indeed, and the best I ever
had

had in my life. She has been a good angel to me and all my family!"

"When your school is dismissed, I shall be glad of a little conversation with you about this same Mrs. Darnford."

"I will send the children home directly, Madam; I will do any thing to oblige a friend of Mrs. Darnford."

The children were dismissed.

As soon as we were alone, I made my enquiries.

She said it was necessary to tell me how she became acquainted with Mrs. Darnford, if it would not be tiresome to me.

I desired she would do so; for I wished to be acquainted with the history of her own situation, and how she came to be so intimately connected with Mrs. Darnford.

"About seven years ago, I was left a widow, with six children. My husband was a master carpenter in this town; a sober, honest, industrious man, and one of the best
of

of husbands and fathers. He saved money; and had put out his two eldest sons before his death, the first to his own trade, the second to a wheelwright; and he had some hundreds in the funds beside. He left me this house decently furnished, and the interest of his money for my life.

“ I had four children to maintain, and wanted to fix upon some way of business to help them and myself, till my son should be out of his time, and succeed to his father’s business. I consulted with my friends; but they could not agree in their advice, and only puzzled me, so that I was unable to determine.

“ One thing I resolved on, which was to let a part of my house; and I had some thoughts of keeping a shop, and selling a few articles; or else taking in clear-starching and needlework, to employ myself and my daughters.

“ I put up a bill at my door—“ Ready
furnished

furnished Lodgings for Ladies of good Character." This was laughed at by some of my neighbours; but I thought it was right, and minded not what people said.

" My youngest boy was a sickly child, and died a few months after his father. My eldest girl was turned of fourteen, and the second thirteen.

" One day, Mrs. Bailey, who keeps the White Hart in this town, sent me word that a lady at her house desired to speak with me. I went directly; and there I first saw Mrs. Darnford, and that was a good day to me.

" Mrs. Bailey said—" Here is a lady who designs to open a school. She enquires for lodgings, to try whether she is likely to succeed before she takes a house to herself. I have encouraged her to undertake it: a school is very much wanted in this town. She is recommended by Mrs. Sorling, and I will answer for her character.

rafter. She has lived in high life, and deserves a better situation than Fortune has given her; but we never could have met with a person so well qualified for our undertaking. I have recommended your lodgings, Mrs. Martin: we will come and see them; and, if they suit Mrs. Darnford, she will take them."

"I thanked Mrs. Bailey for her recommendation, and wished my lodgings might suit the lady. So they returned with me, and looked over them.

"Mrs. Bailey made some objections; but Mrs. Darnford, with that graciousness and sweetness which are natural to her, said—"It is easy to rise to better lodgings, Madam; and I know that it is hard to descend to worse. I like the gentlewoman,"—so she was pleased to call me—"I like her character and behaviour. It is of consequence that I should be in a worthy family,

mily, who can answer for my conduct. I will fix here for the present."

"I was charmed with the lady from the first hour I was in her company. I saw that she was superior to all that I had seen and conversed with. We talked of the terms. Mrs. Darnford proposed to board, as well as lodge, with me. Mrs. Bailey advised it, as most convenient to all the parties. She settled the terms to our mutual satisfaction. She offered the lady a bed at her house, till her lodgings could be got ready. My daughters and I made haste to get them in order. Mrs. Bailey told every body of the new undertaking, and prepared them to receive Mrs. Darnford with due respect and attention.

"A few days after, my good angel came under my humble roof, and brought with her the greatest blessing of my life.

"She wrote, in a fine and curious hand
—"A SCHOOL for FEMALE CHILDREN;
where

where Reading, English, Writing, and all kinds of Needlework, are taught in the best manner."

"In a week's time, the school was opened with ten scholars. Mrs. Bailey sent two of her daughters and a niece. She advised every body to send their children without delay, for they never would have such another opportunity.

"The curate of the parish called upon her, at Mrs. Bailey's desire: he conversed with her, and made his report highly in her favour. He said, she had more knowledge, and less confidence in it, than any woman he had ever met with.

"In the course of a month, the school was increased to twenty scholars. Mrs. Darnford had now her hands full of business, and it was daily increasing.

"One day, she said to me—"My good Mrs. Martin, I have something to propose that I think will be of service both to
you

you and me. I will take one of your daughters into my school, and qualify her to be my assistant, if it is agreeable to you and to her."

"I thank you, Madam; it will be an honour to her, and a service to me. I pray God to reward your goodness to us! Only one thing troubles me—Both my daughters love and admire you: they would be proud to serve you. I fear, that whichever of them is chosen, the other will be grieved and mortified: she will think herself despised, when she is put to do the household work, while her sister is treated like a gentlewoman. I love them equally; and I should be concerned for the poor girl that is rejected."

"Oh, how I love that maternal tenderness!" said the dear lady. "I feel for you the mortification your other good girl would suffer. We must prevent it, by making an alteration in our plan. I will in-

struct both your daughters: one shall be with me in the school one week, and the other the following. They shall take it by turns to assist you and me; and we will make no difference between them. Will this please you, my good friend?"

"I said, I was only afraid she would think I was encroaching upon her goodness.

"She made my mind easy; and her benevolent scheme was put in execution.

"The school continually increased in numbers and credit; the scholars improved very quick, and their friends perceived and acknowledged it.

"I thought my daughters had been well taught to read and write before; but, when they came under Mrs. Darnford's hands, they made such improvements, that I soon found myself to be a poor ignorant woman, and wished also to become Mrs. Darnford's scholar.

"Her

“ Her goodness was so great, that she condescended to instruct me after the school hours; and, oh! what delightful evenings have I spent in her company! She deserved knowledge, because she made a wise and good use of it: she taught us our duty, and set us an example of the practice of it.

“ She read prayers to us every evening; saying, it was the blessing of God that we must rely upon to give success to our endeavours: and that, putting ourselves under his protection, we had every thing to hope, and nothing to fear; while those who lived without God in the world had every thing to fear, and nothing to hope, either here or hereafter.

“ Her conversations were to me as practical sermons, the best and pleasanter that ever I heard. In short, Madam, we grew wiser, and happier, and better, every day of our lives. I shall never forget the blessing

I had in her society, nor ever cease to regret the loss of it, though it is for the good of her health, and for her worldly advantage."

Here she burst into tears; mine accompanied them: they were the tears of virtue, that refreshed the heart, and comforted it; and I enjoyed the effects of them.

You, my Fanny, would never have told me these things yourself; therefore I tell them to you, as a triumph over your reserve, and modesty. I claim a share in the friendship of this honest, grateful, worthy woman; whom I will love always, for your sake and her own.

I said — "I rejoice that my dear friend met with a person capable of understanding her merit, and fine qualities. Henceforward, you must allow me, Mrs. Martin, to call you my friend, and to take an interest in all that concerns you and your family."

"You are very good, Madam; I humbly thank you. I can truly say, that nobody
can

can love and honour Mrs. Darnford more than I do, and that all her friends must ever be dear to me."

"Enough, Mrs. Martin, I love and honour your sincerity as it deserves. Proceed with your story, my heart is deeply engaged with it."

"Some time after this I have been speaking of, Mrs. Darnford said to me—"I have another proposal to make you, Mrs. Martin. You have very bad pins, needles, and threads, in your little town. I am thinking that you might sell some articles in the haberdashery way, to a very good account. You have a shop, you need only have some shelves put into it; I will be at half the expence in fitting it up, and I think you will run very little hazard. What think you?"

"God bless you, Madam!" said I:
"you are always thinking on something for

my good; but how and where can I get them?"

"I will write, in your name, to an eminent haberdasher in London. I will desire him to send the best goods of every kind. I will write your letters, and shew you how to keep your book. One day-book will be sufficient for you, for you must sell for ready money only. You must be very punctual in your remittances of payment, which will induce your dealer to serve you well for his own sake. I shall be a customer to you, so will my scholars; and if your goods are of the best kinds, there is little doubt, that many people will come to the shop of a person so well known and respected as you are in this place."

"No sooner said than done; the goods were ordered, the shop was fitted up, and in less than a month I became a haberdasher of small wares. I sell pins, needles, tapes, thread, silk, worsted for working,
and

and most other articles in this branch of business.

“ My demand exceeded my expectations: it increased, and still increases every year; and the profits are now become very considerable.

“ Finding that all things succeeded to her wishes, Mrs. Darnford extended her views for me still farther.

“ There is yet room in the shop,” said she, “ for a few more articles. I will write to a stationer to send you pens, ink, and paper, wax and wafers, and school-books for the children. We will make it be known, that you have a good correspondence, and you shall sell books by commission; that is, such books as may be ordered, but not otherwise. We will fill the good shop as full as it will hold, and every little will contribute to make the whole answer your purposes.”

“ Whatever you please to order I will
B 4 do,”

do," said I; "your will is my law. I may say of you, as the Scripture does of Joseph, *that wherever he went, he did good to those he lived with; and whatsoever he undertook, the Lord made it to prosper in his hands.*"

"She said I was too grateful; but I answered, that was impossible.

"So, Madam, we went on, and our blessings and comforts increased every year.

"In the second year, Mrs. Darnford offered to increase the price she paid for her board, but I would not hear of it. I said, it ought rather to be lessened, considering all that she had done for me and mine. She took my refusal kindly; but it was all the same in effect as if I had accepted her offer, for she was continually making presents to me and my daughters, as if she was under obligations to us.

"In the third year I took a poor girl from the parish, to do the under-work in
my

my family. Mrs. Darnford insisted on paying her wages; and I was obliged to submit, for there was no stopping her generous hand. Every thing prospered with us; my property daily increased; and, at the year's end, I was amazed at my own riches.

“ I had now all the business I wished, and the friend that I wanted; I had no occasion to consult any others, for I had my oracle at home.”

“ Let us stop here, my good Mrs. Martin; you and your daughter must go and drink tea with me at the White Hart.”

“ Oh, Madam! I hope you will not mortify us so much, as to refuse to drink your tea here.”

“ No, surely, I cannot mean to mortify or affront you, I like you too well.”

“ Then you must treat us like Mrs. Darnford's friends.”

“ Well, I will compromise with you: I will drink tea with you, and you must sup

with me; I have ordered a supper with that intention: your friend Mrs. Bailey must make the fourth, and we will talk of Mrs. Darnford."

She consented to this. Her eldest daughter made tea for us, a modest and well behaved young woman. Mrs. Martin told me, that the second was with Mrs. Darnford, and that her youngest was gone to visit a relation.

"Mrs. Darnford's sister gave me a very strange and imperfect account. Pray, does she *live in a haunted house*, and *take care of a mad woman*?"

Mrs. Martin smiled.— "Why, really, Madam, I cannot tell you how that is, but it is so reported. I have asked some impertinent questions; she is silent on the subject, and so is my daughter Patty. She told me I must not mind the talk of foolish people, but she never said positively that it was not true; however, I will tell you

all

all that I know of this, and every thing else relating to her."

"No, you shall not, till you come to it fairly; you shall not anticipate the rest of your story: take breath awhile, and drink your tea."

After tea, we adjourned to the White Hart, and Mrs. Bailey was called in. She told many things of this *strange* Mrs. Darnford, such things as I never should have heard from herself.

Here I shall finish my letter, but I shall begin another to-morrow. While I am writing, I fancy that I am conversing with my friend, and making up for our long separation. By the interest I take in every person and thing that bears any relation, or has any connection, with her, she will judge of the sincerity of her old and faithful friend,

RACHEL STRICTLAND.

LETTER II.

MRS. STRICTLAND, TO MRS. DARNFORD.

SUPPOSE me sitting at a table, with Mrs. Bailey on one side, and Mrs. Martin on the other — Mary Martin opposite — listening to the praises of Mrs. Darnford from all of them, and gaining little circumstances of her life and character that delight my very soul; and more pleased with my company than I could be in the first circles.

I will not offend your ear by reciting all the good people said; I shall only remark, that Mrs. Bailey was more lively and entertaining, but that Mrs. Martin was more serious and pathetic. All that she said came evidently from the heart, and made it's way directly to mine. Mrs. Bailey related an anecdote that pleased me highly.

“ The rector of our parish, Madam, is one Dr. Proudly: he is very high and
stately;

stately ; and his lady does not deign to associate with us, the parishioners. Her daughters are always dressed in the heights of the fashion, and they visit none but the squire's family.

“ The curate is a modest good man, and kept by his low circumstances from mixing with people of superior fortune. He had seen and understood the merits of Mrs. Darnford. He mentioned her to the Doctor, who resides here only three months in the year, as a person deserving every kind of notice and encouragement. Some time after, the Doctor spoke to her at church, and asked her to drink tea at the parsonage. She went, and confirmed the account they had heard of her. They invited her a second time ; then the Doctor asked her, if what he had heard was true, that she understood both French and Italian. She said, it was.

“ Should

“Should you like to teach my daughter French.”

“She thanked him for his good opinion; but said, her time was already fully employed.

“Could you not come hither of an evening, after your school hours?”

“That is not in my power, it is the only time I have to relax after my labours of the day: I could not undertake more; it would hurt my health, and disqualify me for my business.”

“Suppose you take a house to yourself, send away the vulgar children, and take only those of the better kind of people.”

“That would be running a great hazard; and, besides, it would be making a distinction that must needs offend those who have trusted me with their children, and to whom I am under obligations; it would be very ungrateful in me, and unjust to them. Excuse me, Sir, it is one of those things

things I cannot do, were I to gain ever so great advantages."

"Very well, Mrs. Darnford, nobody desires you to do it: if you are satisfied with your situation, nobody wants to take you out of it. I meant to serve you, but it seems you have other friends whom you prefer to me."

"Sir, I thank you for your intentions; but I am so circumstanced, that they cannot be of any service to me at present."

"I have done, Mrs. Darnford; I was mistaken in you."

"The Doctor assumed an air of coldness and reserve, his lady the same; they never invited Mrs. Darnford any more to their house. His lady said many slighting things of her, which I strove to keep from her knowledge, lest it should vex her."

"She said, that Mrs. Darnford was not at all the woman she was represented to be; that she declined teaching French because
she

she was ignorant of it: that she supposed she was some lady's waiting-woman, who gave herself second-hand airs of education and breeding: but it was easy to see what she was, for she preferred low company to that of people in genteel life.

"I was hurt for Mrs. Darnford, but I never minded Madam's high airs, and I wished for an opportunity to let her know it.

"One Sunday, as I was coming from church, she passed by me; she turned back — "Pray, Mrs. Bailey, who is this Mrs. Darnford that you make such a fuss about; and where does she come from?"

"From heaven," said I: "she was sent hither to civilize us and our children."

"She has not taught you good-manners, however, Mrs. Bailey."

"She teaches us, that virtue makes all the difference between one human creature and another," said I. "But she does not invade

vade the province of the clergy, she leaves it to them to teach us humility."

"Impertinent woman!" said she; "she is fit company for you: birds of a feather will flock together."

"True, Madam," said I, "but we are birds without feathers!"—I looked hard at her daughters, who were plumed to the utmost height—"we are as God made us."

"She turned away in anger. I heard her say to her daughters—"Did you hear the saucy woman?" I laughed, and she fretted: so I went away, satisfied with having made her shrink at my touch."

I was pleased with Mrs. Bailey's wit and spirits. I laughed with her. After some other chit-chat, I begged Mrs. Martin to proceed with her story.

"I told you, Madam, that my shop answered exceeding well; we were all successful and happy. The people sent their children from all the villages round about.

Mrs.

Mrs. Darnford began to complain that the fatigue was too much for her: she grew pale and thin.

“ Several of the principal farmers, parents of the children, used to send a horse, or a light cart, to fetch her on a Sunday to spend the day with them, and to take the air, which she very much wanted.

“ One day, she met at one of these houses a seafaring gentleman, called Captain Morris, or *Maurice*, for so he spells his name.

“ He said he had a child under his care, and he should like to send her to Mrs. Darnford, and that he would call upon her soon.

“ He came the next day; and the more he talked with her, the more he liked her. She asked me, if I should object to take the child as a boarder. I told her, whatever she approved would please me; so they agreed on the price soon.

“ A few days after, he brought a young girl about seven years old, called Miss Brady.

She

She had never had any kind of education, and hardly knew her letters. In a month's time, the child was so improved as surprized every body; and Captain Maurice was astonished at it.

“ He desired to have some conversation with Mrs. Darnford alone. As I understand, he then told her, that he was so unfortunate as to have a wife that was out of her right mind. That he was very unhappy, and that his house was uncomfortable to him; and therefore he was determined to go abroad again, but wanted to find a person whom he could trust his lady with during his absence. That he had heard an excellent character of her, and what he had seen had convinced him, that she was such a person as he wanted. That if she would undertake this charge, he would make it worth her while.

“ She desired some time to consider of this-

this proposal. She consulted me and Mrs. Bailey; who said, it certainly would be a less laborious kind of life for her, but still it might cause her a great deal of care and trouble.

“ I could hardly bear the thoughts of losing her; but yet, if she should lose her health, and go into a decline, that would be much worse, and we should reproach ourselves as being accessory to it: so at last we left it wholly to her own determination.

“ When Captain Maurice called again, she told him, she must see the house and the lady before she resolved. So he carried her away, and they were gone a fortnight.

“ When she returned, she saw us all overjoyed to meet her, and she shed tears while she embraced us. She said it gave her pain to declare her resolution; that she had accepted the trust, and should leave us within a month.

“ When

“When our emotions were somewhat abated, she said—“My dear friend, Mrs. Martin, I have one more proposal to make you: I will from this day make you my full partner in the school. Your eldest daughter shall teach the elder scholars, and you can very well teach the younger ones; I hope you will go on as well as I have done. If some few people should take away their children, it would be no misfortune, for we have too many. I shall tell the parents, that I am obliged to go away for one year; and that in the mean time you and your daughters will carry on the school for me. I will certainly return at the time, and see how you go on. If I like my situation, and if the school succeeds with you, I will quit it entirely to you: if either or neither succeeds, we will take other measures.

“And now I have still another favour to ask of you.”

“Of

“Of me, Madam! What can you ask me, that I can refuse?”

“It is something very dear both to you and to me—It is your daughter Patty: you must let her go with me. I promise that you shall see her once a year, and hear from her oftener. Consider well of it; and if you cannot part with her, I will excuse you.”

“We were all melted into tears; we could not speak for some minutes; at last I struggled with myself and gained my voice.

“Patty,” said I, “do you decide this point; answer for me and for yourself.

“The dear child rose, and threw her arms round my neck. “I hope,” said she, “I have always loved my mother as I ought, and ever shall, as duty and affection oblige me to do; but this dear lady has been the parent of my mind, she has given me a new set of thoughts, and even senses: I feel an affection for her that I cannot describe. If it will not make my
dear

dear mother too unhappy, I will follow her to the world's end."

"She went from me to Mrs. Darnford, who embraced her, and again we were silent for some time. At last Mrs. Darnford spoke—

"It is enough; we understand each other. I see your good hearts, and you know mine. The subject is too affecting to us all; let us quit it for the present, we will resume it another time. You are the relations of my soul, and whatever good Heaven has in store for me, you shall share it. Let us separate and recollect ourselves."

"Mrs. Martin wept while she related this scene, and all the rest of us accompanied her. I begged her to proceed with her narration, as soon as she had recovered herself.

"Mrs. Darnford made daily preparations for her departure. She spoke to the parents of most of the children. She wrote a letter

letter for me to shew to such of them as lived at a distance. In it she thanked them for the encouragement they had given her, and the confidence they had put in her. She told them, she had a call of a particular kind, to take the charge of a poor lady, whose mind was deranged ; that she had hopes that her company and advice might be of service to her, and trusted that she should be in the way of her duty. She proposed to stay one year certain ; at the end of which she would, if alive and able, return again, and either take again the charge of her school, or quit it entirely. In the mean time, she begged, as a favour to herself, that they would continue to send the children to Mrs. Martin and her daughter, whom they would find qualified to go on with them, in the same method which she had used with good success. She recommended them to God's protection, and wished them all manner of happiness.

“ As

“ As the time drew near when she was to leave us, I had many heavy hours. She said, she would not tell me the week, nor the day, nor yet take any particular leave of us, for all our sakes.

“ Miss Brady and my Patty were as lively as birds in the spring; they were not going to lose Mrs. Darnford, but to be her inseparable companions. I often wept by myself, lest my child should think I repented of giving my consent to her going, or Mrs. Darnford should scruple to take her.

“ One day, a cart stopped at our door, and the driver enquired for Mrs. Darnford. She changed colour, and said—“ This cart is come for our baggage; but we are not going to leave you to-day, my good friend.” I shook like a leaf, but I said not a word. She beckoned Patty, and they went out together: they saw their baggage packed up and sent away.

“ She was very chearful all the evening, and said every thing to encourage us to look forward; saying, she hoped we should spend many happy hours together. When she prayed with us, her voice faltered several times; but afterwards she was as chearful as ever I knew her. She bade us good-night, and retired to rest.

“ The next morning, when I came down to breakfast, a letter lay upon the table: it was her charming hand-writing, and directed to me. In it she bade me farewell. She said every thing likely to comfort and support me during her absence. She told me, she and her children rose early, and went to the White Hart; they breakfasted with Mrs. Bailey, and went from thence in her post-chaise on their journey, and that they should overtake the cart in their way. She said the kindest and most affecting things to me and my children,

children, and left her blessings and prayers for me and all my family.

“ You will guess, Madam, what a heavy day this was to me : however, the duties of my business amused and comforted my mind ; and, by degrees, my heart grew lighter, and I set myself to perform the duties of my employment, and to shew myself worthy of the charge she had left with me.

“ One thing I could not but observe ; she never told me the name of the place whither she was going. I had several times asked it, but she always put it by, without giving any direct answer. She said, I should hear from her within a month ; so then, I thought, we should know where to direct our answers. But no such thing came ; we were ordered to direct to her, to be left at the post-house, at N——, and she would send a servant to fetch her letters from thence.”

Here Mrs. Martin stopped; and your poor friend looked vexed and disappointed.

“ So, then, you do not know where Mrs. Darnford lives, and I can neither visit her nor write to her ?”

“ Not quite so bad as that, Madam. I expect my daughter home in a fortnight; and the carriage that brings her, can carry your letter to her.”

“ What, then, does she keep a carriage ?”

She smiled—“ A kind of one, Madam; but not such as would suit you, I believe. It is a light cart, with a seat in it: it carried things from the market, and to the market-town.

“ In a fortnight more, it will come to fetch my Patty home; and then it will bring an answer to your letter, and carry another, if you have it ready. You will
please

please to send your letters to me; I will send them one way or another."

"I thank you, Mrs. Martin, and accept your offer.—Pray, did Mrs. Darnford return hither at the year's end?"

"She did, Madam; and she was so much improved in her health, that she gave pleasure to all that loved her, which was all that knew her value.

"I had but three scholars taken away from me; and, thank God! Mary and I have given pretty good satisfaction, though not equal to Mrs. Darnford. But all that we know we learned from her.

"She was pleased to find that the school answered her wishes: she said, she had hoped that, in a year's time, the people would be accustomed to see me and my daughter in the school, and be contented to go on with us, and rejoiced to find it so.

"She refused to accept any part of the

profits during her absence, and resigned it wholly to me.

“ She did not think it right to make my daughters independent of me : but she advised me, at my own time, to admit my eldest daughter into a share of my business ; not more than a third part, because it might afford a provision hereafter for my two younger daughters ; also, that if either of them should marry, they should forfeit all pretensions to the business.

“ She told me the way to realize my profits, and to employ the money I saved every year.

“ I added yearly to the sum my husband had put out ; and she made me rich, provident, and easy.

“ My eldest son was nearly out of his time. He had been uneasy at my using the shop where he had hoped to exercise the trade of his father.

“ I consulted

“ I consulted Mrs. Darnford on this subject. She said, you must tell him that your using the shop enables you to provide for him upon a larger scale of business. You must hire or purchase a piece of ground for a shop and timber-yard for him; and you must put him into business handsomely, and not think of laying by money that year. You must give him his board and lodging the first year; and, if that is not sufficient, the second year also. You must assist him till he can stand firmly upon his legs. You must tell him that, after so good an outset, he must depend upon his own industry, and that you have others to provide for as well as himself. When he marries, he must take a house for himself, for you must by no means part with yours.

“ She gave me the best advice in all respects; and to this day I do nothing without consulting her, and following her directions in every thing.”

“ And does she still continue in this unknown situation ?”

“ She does, Madam ; but I know no more of it than what I have told you.”

I thanked Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Bailey for their intelligence ; and, as soon as they left me, I sat down to writing and preparing a packet for your hand.

And now, my dear friend, I entreat you to give me the farther particulars of your health and situation. Is it, indeed, a comfortable one ? Are you so engaged to it, that you cannot leave it ? Do you prefer it to the company of an old and faithful friend ? Answer to all these points sincerely.

My Fanny, I am blessed with two children, and an ample fortune : my boy is hopeful and promising ; my girl is the very darling of my soul, and I give up my time and abilities to her education.

I do not like the manners of the youth

I have

I have seen since my return to society ; you are qualified to direct and assist me in the arduous task. Come and share my heart and fortune, not as a dependant, but as my counsellor and instructress, and my daughter's governess and friend. You must either accept my offer, or give me reasons why you reject it.

I stay one day more at W——, to converse with your worthy friend here. I send my letter by Mrs. Martin's method of conveyance, and expect an answer as soon as possible.

Though entirely my own mistress, I am not without fears of my conduct ; and, though I may chuse my own society, I am like the poor Irishman, alone in a throng.

I want a friend, who will neither flatter nor despise me ; who will cherish my virtues, and assist me to correct my faults. I know but one person who can supply all

these requisites; if she will deign to undertake this generous office, it is I that shall be the obliged person, and not her.

Weigh these things in your own mind, and accept the effusions of a heart, that means more than it can well express; that feels every sentiment of affection, esteem, and confidence, towards you: it is that of your old and sincere friend and servant,

RACHEL STRICTLAND.

LETTER

LETTER III.

MRS. DARNFORD, TO MRS. STRICTLAND.

NOT showers of rain to the thirsty earth, when parched with long droughts, were ever more welcome than my dear Rachel's letters to me!

Adversity is the test of friendship, the trier and purifier of the human heart: not half its virtues could be known or proved without it. Yet we still shrink at the thoughts of suffering; we shudder at the approach of poverty, we suppose it the greatest of all evils.

To those who have been brought up in the bosom of indolence and affluence, it appears so; but I can say of it, as Dryden does of death—"To innocence
" 'tis but a bugbear dressed to frighten
" children; pull but off the mask, and it
" will appear a friend." What advan-

tages have I not received from my trials! They have taught me to know the world and myself; to separate the grain from the chaff of my acquaintance; to gain real and sincere friends, to pity and forgive my enemies.

How dear and precious is a friend, whose affection and fidelity are proved beyond the possibility of doubting! How inestimable are your cares and attentions, your indefatigable enquiries after me! What pains have you taken to get information of every circumstance relative to me and my situation! How sincerely have you been interested for me! I can never sufficiently acknowledge your generous and steady friendship; but I shall wear the remembrance in my heart once and always.

You have a right to be informed of every circumstance of my life and fortunes,
of

of my past trials and my present situation; and you shall have them truly.

You have had a very partial account of me, during my residence at W——; but, as it includes many proofs of gratitude and affection from my friends there, it is very dear and valuable to me.

I am pleased that I know all that you have heard, that I may connect it with the foregoing and succeeding parts of my story. But you judge rightly, that you would never have heard from me all that my humble and grateful friends have told you. I will tell you what remains of my history; and I expect, in return, that you should relate all that has happened to you since our separation.

My present situation is not uncomfortable. I have been enabled to give hope and comfort to an unfortunate lady, who wanted a friend, and who deserved to find one.

When

When you have heard all the circumstances, you will judge whether I can, and whether I ought to leave her.

Heaven has also given me two children ; which, though not mine by nature, are so by adoption. All these are inexpressibly dear to me ; and all of them depend upon my affection, cares, and protection.

My eldest sister was married to a woollen-draper and stuff-mercier in London, with my father's full consent and approbation. He carried me with him to the celebration of the nuptials, and to shew me the capital of the three kingdoms. The scene was new and entertaining ; I enjoyed it as such. I was noticed as a new face, not yet cheap in the eyes of men. I was followed, admired, and solicited ; but I was more frightened than gratified by the attentions that were paid me. My father was attentive to the notices I received : he was very desirous to see me settled for life before he died.

died. He was then in a decline, and I knew it; though he carefully concealed it from his children, lest he should afflict them prematurely.

George Darnford, Esq. was the first man that made me a serious offer. He was young, handsome, gay, and pleasing. There was an air of ease and affluence about him, that pleases the many more than real merit. The first quality strikes the eye, and few people take the trouble to look farther.

At the age of twenty-three he succeeded to an estate of twelve hundred pounds a year, by the death of an uncle. He had been bred to the law; but he disdained business of every kind, and set out in a way that shewed he was likely to lessen his fortune.

My father was transported with joy at the prospect of so handsome an establishment
for

for me: he urged me warmly to accept it, and he hastened the conclusion of it.

I did not dislike the man, but I wished to know more of him before I should make him the master of my fate. My scruples were over-ruled, and my marriage was precipitated.

I was pleased with my husband, and he was extravagantly fond of me. My sisters envied me my prize; but, had they known the man, they would rather have thought me an object of pity than envy.

Our first winter was spent in all the pleasures and dissipations of the capital. My husband was gay, careless, and easy. I was frightened at the expences of our establishment, and soon foresaw the approaching consequences. I studied Mr. Darnford's temper and propensities. I found that pride and indolence were his leading qualities: the first led him into what is called

called the *best company*, and made him imitate their manners and follies; the second hindered him from looking into his own affairs, and making such reforms and retrenchments as might have retrieved them.

He hated trouble of every kind; and all the time he could spare from the *best company* was spent in eating, drinking, and sleeping; in studying luxuries for the following day, and directing his cook how to dress them; for he was dainty in his palate, and could not eat plain-dressed food.

A proof of his pride he gave me soon after our marriage: he desired me not to visit my sister or her husband often, but by degrees to break with them; and not take it ill, if he refused to go with me into the city, for he had no relish for any *bourgeois* acquaintance; and besides, if it were known that he visited tradesmen, he might be excluded the higher circles.

My

My brother-in-law soon perceived his coolness, and his motives: it drew upon me the resentment of all his family, without any fault of mine, but a reluctant compliance with his commands.

He staid out very late most nights. At first I sat up for him; but he desired I would go to bed at my usual time.

The evenings I spent alone, were devoted to reading and writing. I had a master three times a week, to improve me in French and Italian. I went into public places, in compliance with my husband's wishes, and never but when he was of the party. I kept up a general acquaintance with such families as he recommended, but I made no friendship: my mind refused to open itself to them; and I found nothing to invite me to esteem or confidence.

When Mr. Darnford came home from his nocturnal orgies, he crept to bed very softly; and wished not to awaken me,
but

but rather that I should be ignorant what hours he kept. Sometimes, if he found me awake, he would apologize, saying—
 “ My Fanny, I ask your pardon ; but I have been in the *best company*, and could not break away before they separated.”

At length I began to reply in my own way—I wished he might not pay too dear for keeping the *best company*. I enquired how they spent their time ; I declaimed on the mischiefs of gaming.

He was displeased at my remarks ; he would not be so catechized ; he was judge of his own conduct, and would endure no such monitor.

I rejoiced at the approach of spring. I asked when he meant to leave London.

“ Not till after the king’s birth-day, certainly !” was the answer ; “ it would be absurd to think of it.”

We had sometimes parties at home, but not very often ; I was always glad
 when

when they were over. I saw we were ruining ourselves, and cast about how to prevent it, but in vain.

At length, the birth-day was past. I made preparations for leaving London. He saw that I was impatient to be gone.

He came in, one day, and looked confused and uneasy.

“Madam, I am come to tell you, we shall leave London to-morrow; for I can stay here no longer.”

“I am glad of it, Sir.”

“So am not I; but it must be so.”

“Then I hope you will make it easy to yourself; and I will do all in my power to make the country agreeable to you.”

“Do you love the country, Fanny?”

“Yes, I do, especially when you are there.”

“Thank you, my dear; but my company has not made you love London.”

“I do not love it's vanities and dissipations,

tions, it's temptations, it's extravagant expences. It is not the place for people to grow wise or good in."

He smiled — "Do you think the country will make me grow wise and good?"

"I hope so; and I pray that it may."

He shook his head — "Well, say no more of that. I am afraid you are too good and too wise for me."

"Few husbands pay such compliments to their wives; but I will try to deserve them by my conduct."

"Oh, Fanny, you are fly: you do not think I meant you a compliment. You are a good girl, but you are too serious. Don't preach to me, for it does me no good. Pack up your matters, and prepare for your journey."

So saying, he left me; and I lost no time in obeying his last command.

The next day, we left London; and
I pleased

I pleased myself with thinking that he would be all that I wished, when taken away from the *best company*, and obliged to associate with men of reason and principle.

Vain hope! vain expectation! The idle and dissipated always find companions wherever they go. It is not places, but persons, that make the manners of society. Those who complain of the society and situation where Heaven has placed them, are generally the people to be most complained of, who first act improperly, and then complain of the society they fall among, and the places where they reside.

The first month we spent in the country, I was pleased and entertained with a round of useful employments.

Our seat was pleasantly situated, on a rising ground, near a navigable river. On the opposite side were seen woods and lawns, with gentlemen's seats interspersed. It was a charming prospect, that cheered
the

the heart, and delighted the eye. The house was a good one, not new, but airy and lightsome; it was well furnished, neat, and convenient: nothing was wanting, but that the master might be capable of enjoying his own blessings.

He sunk into supine indolence; he lounged about from one room to another, ate and slept, and thought the days too long for him.

I endeavoured to inspire him with a love of country amusements. I walked with him, rode with him, fished with him.—He tasted no pleasure in any thing. I read to him, and conversed with him—he went to sleep. He asked my pardon: but reading and talking always had that effect upon him; except in a large circle of company, where the conversation was joyous, and entertaining enough to keep him awake.

I told him, that no man could be happy without some pursuit or employment.

ment.—He said, it was true; for the country was cursedly dull, but in London he never wanted employment.

I asked him what employment he followed there?—He could not specify any, but said there was a constant succession all the day and night.

I could have specified the fatal one that was his ruin—gambling:—but I forbore it, and strove to lead him gently into the path of reason and of virtue.

I pointed out the study of agriculture.—He despised it, as fit only for vulgar people.

“Gardening!”—“The same.”

I told him, that the greatest and wisest of men, of all ages and countries, had not thought it beneath them to pursue these and the like studies.—He left it to them, and had no wish to rob them of such honours.

“What

“What are the honours to which you aspire?”

“A large fortune, that would allow me to enjoy all the pleasures life affords. I hate to be stinted in any thing.”

“I will tell you the way to be rich.”

“Pray do, and I will thank you.”

“By regularity and oeconomy.”

“Paltry *bourgeois* qualities! I hate and despise them.”

“They are as necessary for gentlemen as for citizens.”

“I leave them to citizens and stewards.”

“Let me be your steward?”

“Yes, that you may check my expences—no, thank you.”

“But, suppose you were running out your fortune, would you not thank a friend that would retrieve it?”

“No; I should think such a friend very impertinent. I would not retrench till I thought fit.”

“ Then it might be too late.”

“ Then I will live while I may; and I will hear no more preaching at this time: the sermon is too long.”

He run out of the room; and I saw him no more till the evening.

The gentry of the neighbourhood came to visit us. Mr. Darnford received them with coldness and indifference. I tried to make amends by my courtesy and attention.

The clergyman of the parish was, what all ministers ought to be, an humble, modest, courteous man; his wife, a very friendly, good woman: he treated them contemptuously. Had they been like Dr. Proudly and his lady, he would have liked them better.

It was with some difficulty I prevailed on Mr. Darnford to return, with me, the visits we received. He said, he should not be much here, and he cared not whether they liked him or not. His behaviour lessened

lessened him greatly with them, and with me also: but he was my husband, and I resolved to do every thing in my power to serve and save him. I exerted all my abilities to please him, and to obtain his esteem and confidence, in hopes he would suffer me to assist him in regulating his affairs, and discharging his debts; but he spurned the idea of it.

In this manner we spent the first months at our country-seat. One day, he came in with a newspaper in his hand—the only kind of reading he loved or desired—

“ My dear, I have something to propose, that I hope will be agreeable to you. Ipswich races are next week: will you go there with me ?”

“ I thank you, Sir, for your kind invitation; but, will it not be attended with too much expence ?”

“ Leave that to me, Madam.”

“ You are not offended, I hope, that I

wish to spare you in every thing that concerns myself."

"Yes, Madam; you are always checking me, and shewing your own prudence at my expence. No matter! do as you please; but I shall go, whether you approve it or not."

He left me in displeasure, and said no more upon the subject.

The next day, I received a letter from my younger sister, informing me, that my father was very ill, and desired to see me as soon as I could conveniently go to him.

When Mr. Darnford came in, I was in tears. He came to me kindly, and asked what was the cause of my grief, seeming as if he thought it was himself. I shewed him the letter; he read it, and asked me what I meant to do. I told him, I wished he would carry me to my father's, and leave me there, while he went to Ipswich
races,

aces, and call for me at his return from thence.

He said—"Had you rather spend the time with your father?" I answered, that I should; I thought him in a dangerous way, and should never forgive myself, if I neglected my duty to him, and went in pursuit of pleasure, falsely so called, in my estimation. When I had paid this duty, I would attend him upon the first notice.

He said—"I will do as you desire. I have spoken too sharply to you; and I ask your pardon."

This good-natured apology comforted me. I thanked him for it; and we were again on good terms.

As soon as I was ready, he carried me to my father's. He staid there one night only, and then went on to Ipswich races.

My father told me plainly, that he was going very fast, and that he wished to take a last leave of me. He bade me look

upon his death as natural and unavoidable. He wished me sometimes to remember him, but not to lament him. He hoped my husband would be my comforter and protector. He had heard, with concern, that he was too expensive, and that he was addicted to gambling: but he hoped my prudence would be a check to him; and that he would stop in time, for my sake and his own.

My father said, Mr. Darnford had acted so handsomely in making me a settlement of three hundred a year, that he could not tie up the residue he had to leave me: but that he would venture to give him a word of advice when he should take leave of him.

He told me, that his first clerk and assistant, Mr. Jones, had offered himself to my sister Jane, in the hope of succeeding to his business; which would make him as good a match as her fortune required,
and

and her person could expect; and that he had given his consent to the marriage. That he expected my eldest sister and her husband to visit him, after I should have left him. He was sorry to find that they avoided meeting Mr. Darnford and me, and that there was a coldness between us.

I said, that Mr. Darnford had assumed a kind of superiority that had offended them; that I was sorry for it, but could not help it.

My father gave me two bank-notes, one for fifty, the other an hundred pounds. He charged me to keep them safely from my husband's knowledge; saying, I might want them for my own expences.

He took pleasure in conversing with me alone. He had a partiality for me, he confessed, because I most resembled my mother; but he had kept an equal hand, and given us an equal share of his fortune.

He gave me also my dear mother's picture. This, and his other private benefaction, were the only marks of his acknowledged partiality: they were very dear to me, and received with many tears of gratitude and tenderness.

My sisters never loved me, though I never knew the reason. Perhaps they perceived my father's partiality. However it was, I was grieved that they were the only persons who treated me unkindly. My marriage increased their malevolence. My eldest sister had something like a reason: the younger had none. She was jealous and uneasy at my private interview with my father: I tried to conciliate her affections, but in vain.

Mr. Darnford returned at the week's end, to carry me home. He shewed concern for my father's situation. He told him it was a common one, and what all the

the race of man were born to ; it was a lesson of mortality.

He said—" Sir, this is probably the last time I shall see you ; allow me the privilege of a father to speak a word of advice to you. I am told that you are very expensive and dissipated ; and, worst of all, that you are a frequenter of gaming-tables. This is, of all others, the readiest way to dissipate a fortune, without either pleasure or credit. If you find your own fortune insufficient for you, how will you bear the sting of poverty, and the reproach of having deserved it ? How will you sustain the contempt of the world, and particularly of those men who have led you into this vice, and who will be with the first to blame and shun you ? But, above all other evils, how will you bear the reproach of your own heart ?

" Consider these things, dear Sir, whilst it is in your power to amend them : be just

to yourself, and the world will respect you.

“ I must assure you, that I did not hear these tidings from your wife, but from some persons who were eye-witnesses of your conduct in London, and who have foretold what I hope will not come to pass.

“ You will correct yourself; you will retrench all superfluous expences; you will shun gambling, as the gulph of destruction. As a proof of the good opinion I have of you, I leave the residue of my daughter's fortune in your hands. Consider, it is a sacred trust, and beware how you abuse it. I leave my dearest child in your protection; be good to her, and be good to yourself; that is all I ask of you.”

The tear stood quivering in Darnford's eye. I hailed the omen, and felt hope relieving my oppressed heart.

My father held out his hand to my husband. He gave him his own. I kneeled down,

down, took Darnford's hand, and with my eyes implored a blessing.

He gave it most cordially ; and it was properly received by us both.

My father was fatigued with this exertion. He bade us retire. He did not wish us to stay and watch the expiring embers of life : he even named the morrow, as the day of our departure.

I took a solemn farewell, and went away with my husband. He saw my grief, and endeavoured to comfort me.

I told him, it was only in his power to comfort me, by obeying my father's injunctions.

He was affected. He heard me with temper. He said, he would try to do better in future, than he had done hitherto : that my father was certainly right ; and he would profit by his admonitions.

This hope gave me comfort, and abated my grief for my worthy father.

My father's situation and injunctions had made a faint impresson upon the light mind of George Darnford. He behaved better; and even would listen to my advice, and promised to follow it.

My father died within a fortnight after our return home. He left a brother lawyer his executor: which I was glad to hear; for I feared that all our affairs would have fallen into the hands of Mr. Jones, of whom I had no good opinion. But my father's probity and good sense directed him to the best method of doing justice to all his children.

Upon a fair division of his property, my proportion of the residue amounted to eleven hundred pounds. Darnford asked me, how I wished to dispose of it.

I told him, I wished it employed in the way that was the most to his advantage—in paying his debts; which I dared not enquire

quire into, till now that I had hopes to discharge them.

He looked fullen and uneasy, but made no answer.

Soon after, the executor wrote again, to know how and where Mr. Darnford would receive the money.

He ordered, that a thousand pounds should be placed in the hands of an eminent banker in London, and the remainder sent to his house here.

He paid me the compliment of shewing me the letter and his answer, but asked not for my advice or approbation. When I began to enquire, he always stopped me.

I once said—"It is pity the money should lie in a banker's hands, when it might be employed to advantage."

"I shall dispose of it," said he, "when I go to town."

"Have

“Have you any thoughts of going thither, Mr. Darnford?”

“I shall go thither when I think proper!” was his answer.

I feared to say more.

There was an house in our neighbourhood to be sold by auction. Lord A—— bought it for an hunting-seat, and furnished it in the cottage style. He knew Darnford, and invited him to dine with him. They commenced an intimacy: a fatal one it proved.

Lord A—— called upon him several times. He was introduced to me, and desired my acquaintance. He begged me to superintend the furnishing of his cottage, and to order what was wanting.

The transient impression of mortality was now worn out. He embraced Lord A——’s friendship with eagerness: he was more with him than at home. His notice gratified his pride, and stirred his indolence:

lence: it made him as happy as he desired to be.

My lord swore we were a charming pair, and capable of making the country agreeable at any time of the year. He staid about five weeks at his cottage, and then went to another seat. He desired that we would use the cottage as our own, when he was not there. He hoped we should be very intimate in town, in the winter.

I told him, it was my wish to stay where I was, and not go to town at all.

“The devil it is!” said Darnford; “then, you will stay here by yourself, my dear. I would not live here in the winter, to be lord of the whole country.”

“You will settle that point in the mean time,” said my lord; “and I will hope to see you at my house, very often.”

He took a polite leave, and left us.

After my lord was gone, Darnford
lounged

lounded away his time, as usual, inattentive to all the beauties of nature that surrounded him : the fields, crowned with the golden harvest ; the trees, rich with fruit ; and every flower and herb that sips the dew, in blossom ; the industrious labourer, singing amidst his toils ; the grateful incense which all nature daily offers to her Creator. I tried to open his eyes to these beauties, and his heart to a sense of gratitude to Heaven, for the blessings with which he was surrounded. In vain were all my efforts. The harlots, Fashion and Folly, had got entire possession of his heart, and lulled all his nobler faculties into a profound sleep, from which he would not be awakened.

Darnford now got acquainted with some of the neighbouring gentry : he got among some jolly fellows, who loved the bottle. He drank with them ; and, when they were elevated with liquor, they discovered, that

Darnford

Darnford was best company when he was so too. They grew fond of him; and he amused himself with them, because he was not within reach of his *best company*, as he called it.

Lord A—— returned in September. Darnford left his jolly fellows, and flew to him. They went out together, and pursued the sports of the field. They commonly dined together, at a late hour. I was always invited to make one at the table; but I had been brought up with *vulgar* ideas, and chose to eat at vulgar hours.

My husband often complained of my vulgar propensities; but he hoped another winter in London would do them all away.

I dreaded what another winter in London would do for him, and felt it, by anticipation: he longed as much for the time.

Lord

Lord A—— carried Darnford with him to the October meeting at Newmarket, where they staid a fortnight.

There was a farmer's daughter in the village, whom I distinguished from the rest of the young people. She was sensible and modest, and had a desire to improve herself in reading and writing. She loved my company; and I became her preceptress. When my husband was with Lord A——, she was my constant companion; and my vulgar taste preferred her conversation to that of most of those I had met in the *best company*.

When Darnford was at home, I sent her word not to come to the Hall. I had found him too familiar with one of my maidens; and I feared to trust my good Betsey in his company; for she was “fair, and comely to look on.”

When the gentlemen returned from Newmarket, Betsey was with me. They
examined

examined her attentively with their eyes, and asked, where I had found that pretty maiden.

I said—"Where all good girls should be found—at her father's house."

They told me, they would dine with me. I went out to give orders, and made a sign to Betsey to follow me. I gave her a caution against minding gentlemen's idle talk, and sent her home immediately.

When I returned, they bade me wish them joy; for they had been very fortunate. I shook my head, and said nothing.

"Look here, Fanny!" said Darnford, and took several *roulcaus* out of his pocket.

He threw one into my lap—"There is something, to persuade you to prepare for a journey to London, and to buy new cloaths there!"

"I do not want any, Mr. Darnford: my cloaths are as good as new."

"Oh,

“ Oh, but they have been seen, and will be known again: besides, they will be old-fashioned; and you will look like a fright, till they are new-modelled to the fashion.”

“ If you do not think me frightful, I shall not care what others think of me.”

“ You are a good girl; but you make every thing a serious matter.—My lord, she has but one fault: she is too good.”

“ For you, perhaps, Darnford. If I were to marry, I should wish for just such a wife.”

I bowed to my lord. Darnford was pleased with the compliment; and they rallied each other.

They dined with me, and invited me to sup with them, at the cottage. I begged to be excused, as their hours did not suit me.

Mr. Darnford spent part of every day with Lord A——, and often the whole, from the hour of breakfast.

I was

I was fond of country amusements. My dairy, my poultry-yard, my orchard, every green plant, gave me pleasure. We might have lived well, out of the produce of our farm; and there might have been money enough to squander away, for any man of a moderately expensive turn: but gaming is a gulph that swallows every thing.

———The world is but a world:

Were it all yours, to give it in a breath,

How quickly were it gone!

SHAKESPEARE.

Lord A—— left his cottage in the beginning of November; and, from that time, I was employed in warding off our fatal journey: I even used artifice to delay it.

I told Darnford, that it was vulgar to go before Christmas; for no people of fashion would be in town. He agreed to that; but, still, it was pleasanter than the country.

I kept

I kept it off till the first week in February, well knowing that I was saving so much money as would be idly spent, or thrown away at the gaming-tables.

Lord A—— wrote to Darnford, and offered him his services in town: he offered him an apartment in his own house. This made him fix a day for our journey.

I begged him to be content with lodgings, and avoid all superfluous expences. He would not hear, nor mind me. We must go directly, and nothing should hinder it.

I set out with a foreboding heart. I asked, where we were to go immediately. —“ To Lord A——’s. He has invited us to stay with him till we have a house ready.”

I did not approve it; but it signified nothing. He would not be told of the impropriety; and I had nothing to do, but to obey.

Lord

Lord A—— received us with every mark of friendship and attention. He led us to the upper end of the table; and, in the politest manner, asked the favour of me to do the honours of a bachelor's house, who was proud to see a lady preside in it: he should think himself under an obligation for my assistance.

He told the company who we were, and called Mr. Darnford his friend.

They were all gentlemen; and I felt a conscious awkwardness in doing the honours of the table. The vulgar virtue, called *modesty*, hung about me, and told me I was not in my proper place; though Lord A——'s politeness endeavoured to make it easy to me.

Darnford was quite at home, and at ease; and I never saw him more agreeable.

Lord A—— dined at home oftener than usual, in compliment to me. He and
Darnford

Darnford spent their evenings abroad, and never came home till a very late hour.

Whenever they dined at home, there was a circle of company. Sometimes ladies were invited; but they were not such as my mind could acquaint with—gay, vain, dissipated; they only gave me subjects for meditation and vexation.

There was a rout, one day. Good Heaven! what an assembly of men and women; who seemed to have discarded nature from their persons and manners, and to be acting in masquerade!

“Surely,” said I, “these are not English people!—I must be conveyed into some strange land, where neither religion, reason, nor taste, have any influence.”

The women shocked me. There was a boldness and self-consequence about them, that contradicted all my ideas of feminine delicacy: painted, patched, perfumed, powdered, till you knew not of what complexion

plexion they were ; full of gesticulations, that made them look like actresses who overdo the modesty of nature : in short, made up with all sorts of fashionable materials, till there was not a trace of nature upon them. “ It seemed as if Nature’s journeymen had made men and women, they disgraced human nature so abominably.” I was sick of them. I wished myself any where but where I was, though it was in the *best company*.

Lord A—— had desired me to play for him. I begged to be excused playing at all ; but it was not allowed.

I was placed at a table where they played Half-guinea Whist. There was a lady of the party who absolutely stared me down. I never saw, in either sex, such a degree of assurance as she exhibited. The cards relieved me ; and Fortune gave me my revenge upon her, for I won all that I played for. There was a kind of jeer

upon her countenance, that obliged me to look at her as little as possible; but I shall never forget her while I live.

The gentlemen were polite; and one of them seemed to feel for me. He gave some significant glances at my opponent: his eyes seemed to correct her's; but they, in return, bade him defiance. He was my partner; he perceived my diffidence, and gave me encouragement.

I was heartily glad when this scene was over, for it fatigued my mind.

I offered my lord the money I had won: he refused to take it. I told him, that I would then play no more for him. We had a contest; but he obstinately refused it.

I had cards from most of the company I had seen at Lord A——'s, but declined all their invitations.

Darnford was offended: he would accept them, if I did not. I said, he was his
own

own master ; but what made his paradise, was my purgatory.

One day, a nobleman and his wife dined at Lord A——'s. In this charming lady, I saw all that I had looked for in vain in the *beau monde*—good sense, good breeding, and that complacency that accommodates itself to it's company, and makes inferiors easy before it.

This lady opened my lips ; and I felt myself honoured and delighted with her conversation.

Lord A—— observed me ; and, after they were gone, he said—" I do not ask you, how you like Lady B—— : I see, in your intelligent countenance, all that passes in your mind. She is, indeed, good and amiable. Though I comply, in some degree, with the whims of fashion, I know how to distinguish superior merit, and to pay homage to it. I promise myself, my dear Mrs. Darnford, that you will not de-

cline answering Lady B——'s visit. Am I mistaken, or no?"

"My lord, I shall be afraid of you: you can read my thoughts."

"You need not, Madam; for you have nothing to conceal."

Darnford rallied my lord upon his penetration; and said, he had seen many ladies that he liked better than Lady B——.

"Her good qualities," said my lord, "are those of all times, and all countries; they do not depend on fashion. Wherever Lady B—— had appeared, she would have been beloved and respected."

I was pleased with his plaudit: it shewed discernment and judgment.

I have told you, that Darnford spent his evenings abroad—I might have said *nights*; for he seldom came home till four or five o'clock: from words that fell from him undesignedly, I found they were spent in gaming. Sometimes he was unreasonably elevated;

elevated ; at others, depressed. I was dissatisfied with him, and with our situation. I wished to remove to a place of our own. I could not bear that we should be guests, and, as it seemed, dependent on Lord A——. I frequently asked, when we were to leave him, but always received evasive answers. I would rather have lived in a cottage, with peace and a little, than in a palace, with these apprehensions of approaching poverty and ruin.

Some days after, cards were sent from Lord and Lady B——, inviting Lord A——, and Mr. and Mrs. Darnford, to dine with them, in Portman Square. Lord A—— would not suppose a denial possible on our part. Darnford answered for himself and me ; and I did not decline it.

Darnford insisted that I should have a new dress on the occasion. I begged to appear in my wedding-cloaths, which were not soiled, nor yet out of fashion : he would

not hear of it. He bade me go to a certain mercer's, and take up new in his name. I told him, I had money by me; and I should take nothing but what I paid for before I wore it. He laughed at my folly and ignorance, but insisted on the new dress. He went with me, and chose it, lest my vulgar taste should disgrace him. It was bought, paid for, and made up against the day appointed.

When I went to the great business of the *toilette*, I found, in one of the dressing-boxes, a compleat set of pearls, of great value, which I was desired to adorn, by wearing them.

I was confounded and uneasy. I ordered my servant to enquire for her master; and, if he was in the house, to send him to me before the *friseur* came.

He was at home, and came in a few minutes. I shewed him the jewels—"Did you purchase them, Mr. Darnford?"

"Ha!—

“ Ha!—why, no—yes—no matter—what signifies who bought them: here they are, very opportunely.”

“ Answer me truly, Sir—Do you know who sent them hither?”

“ No, not I: they came here of themselves, for ought that I know.”

“ Very well,—But you see them; and I desire you will enquire who sent them. I will not wear them, till I know whether I ought to accept of them.”

“ Then, you are cursedly silly. I command you to wear them.”

“ Sir, I do not think myself bound to obey *all* your commands. You have power to ruin my fortune,* and to destroy my peace: but my principles you shall never destroy; they forbid me to accept of presents from any man, except my husband; and I know too well, that he cannot afford to make such presents; and therefore I will not wear them.”

“ Tal didi-dididum ! — Madam, your most humble servant.”

He ran out of the room; and came thither no more, till after I was drest and gone into another room.

I did not wear the pearls, but drest myself in my own ornaments. I was uneasy; and grew more so, as I reflected on the dangers that surrounded me. I could not disappoint Lady B——, nor had I any inclination to do it. I resolved to come to an explanation with Lord A——, whom I suspected to have sent this present, and to leave his house as soon as possible.

I should have spent an agreeable day; but, whenever I reflected upon my dangerous situation, I felt, as it were, a string pulling at my heart, and telling me, I had no right to be chearful.

Lady B—— observed, that I was very serious for so young a lady: Darnford told her, it was my only fault.

After

After dinner, we retired, and she began an agreeable conversation. “ I would not,” said she, “ invite other company, because I desired to have you to myself. I have seen enough, my dear Mrs. Darnford, to wish to know more of you. Let us be good neighbours and friends.”

I thanked her ladyship for the honour she did me. I said, when we should be got into a house or lodgings of our own, I should be proud to cultivate her acquaintance ; that, at present, we were out of our right place, and awkwardly situated ; that I was impatient to remove, and should not be happy till we did.

“ You are right, Mrs. Darnford. I commend your prudence.”

“ May I ask your ladyship, in confidence, what is Lord A——’s character? He is but a late acquaintance of our’s. That he is a man of sense and politeness, every one sees. He is very fond of Mr.

Darnford's company; and they are inseparable: but I felt it as an impropriety, that we should make his house our home; and I wish to escape from it."

"I will answer you sincerely, Madam. I believe Lord A—— is a man of honour and principle. He is young, gay, and fashionable; and has been rather free in his conduct, but with discretion. Where he professes a friendship, I believe he is sincere: my lord loves and esteems him. I see that your prudence foresees and guards every point of conduct: I love and honour you the more. You may trust me safely; and, if any difficulties should arise, command my friendship and my services."

After this, we conversed upon many subjects. I found her well informed in all respects, and very polite and accomplished.

When the gentlemen came in to tea and coffee, Lord B—— urged us to stay supper; and we did not part till a late hour.

I was

I was not well all the evening, nor yet easy in my mind, which perhaps increased my disorder. Lady B—— observed me to change colour several times. She asked me to retire from company : I declined it, and resolved to stay where I was. I was rejoiced when the carriage came, and motioned to go. The gentlemen could not let me go alone; and we went accordingly.

I will here conclude this sheet, and sign it with my initials,

F. D.

LETTER IV.

MRS. DARNFORD. IN CONTINUATION.

THERE was a trait in Darnford's character, that gave me hope that he would at last hear me and follow my counsels.

When I was in health, and at ease, he seemed to be quite indifferent towards me; but, if I was sick or distressed, it seemed to call forth all his tenderness, his love revived, and he was assiduous to comfort and support me.

I had not been well all the day that I spent at Lord B——'s. When I returned home, my sickness returned; and, before I could be undressed, I fainted away.

Never was man more tender and assiduous than my husband at this moment: he assisted my servant to put me to bed, he gave me drops and water, and would have

sat

sat up the remainder of the night if I had permitted him.

When he came to bed, I thanked him for his care and attention.

“ I could not have thought you were so ill,” said he. “ Fanny, you looked like an angel to-day, you were well dressed, and were an elegant figure : did you put on *rouge* to-day ?”

“ No, Mr. Darnford, I never do, nor will I; but, indeed, I had hoped that you loved me for myself, and that my dress was of little consequence to an husband.”

“ You are mistaken, my dear; it is of great consequence to me; and it gives you consequence in the sight of others, and then I love you the better.”

I sighed. I was mortified that this man's weak and frivolous mind should value me more for a new dress than for any internal quality, though I was always neat in my dress, and appeared as became his degree ;
but

but my lot was cast, and I resolved to make the best of it.

He asked me often how I did, and what he could do for me.

“I will tell you what will contribute most to my health and chearfulness: take me from Lord A——’s house, and carry me to some place that I can call my home.”

“Why,” said he, “what objection have you to this house?”

I told him all my objections; and shewed him the dangers that attended me and himself, from living in a state of luxury above our fortune; and his own reluctance to leave it was the strongest proof of it.

I asked him, whether he knew who sent me the set of pearls; he said, upon his soul he did not, but supposed they came from Lord A——.

I asked, if he thought it right for me to accept presents from gentlemen, especially single ones.—He saw no harm

in

in it, so long as the husband knew and allowed it.

I was not obliged to tell my husband, I might have concealed it from his knowledge—He had so good an opinion of me, that he was sure I should act right upon all occasions.

We spent the remainder of the night in these altercations, and did not fall asleep till some time after day-light.

When Darnford told Lord A——, that I had been ill, he shewed every kind of attention and politeness.

He sent several messages, and desired I would not leave my own apartment. I sent word I was better, and should come down to dinner at the usual hour.

He sent to know, whether I would allow him to wait on me in the dressing room. I answered, I should be honoured to receive him there.

I resolved to come to an explanation with him concerning the pearls, which were
still

still in the box, and to speak upon some other points as occasions might arise.

I encouraged myself to act as became me; and, knowing I was right, to put aside disqualifying fears: but, alas! they would rise, in spite of all my reasonings against them.

My lord came directly—he was full of concern for my indisposition; he was polite and friendly, and wished he could do any thing for my service.

I made acknowledgments for his friendship and attention.

After many compliments, I at length introduced the subject of the pearls.

The more sensible I was of their value, the more desirous I was to return them: they were above our degree and fortune, and I could never think of wearing them.

On his side, much sophistry, but no argument.

Supposing they were his present, which he had not yet acknowledged, what harm could

could there be in accepting the offering of friendship?—it looked like pride, to decline it.

Perhaps it might, but it was the pride of honesty and integrity, which wishes not to accept favours it can never return, and is already too much obliged.

“ In what respect ?”

“ In making your house our home. Excuse me, my lord; but I feel that we are out of our proper place. When people are in our situation, they should not mix with those too much above them.

“ Mr. Darnford has a turn for expence, and for dissipation. After living in the house of a nobleman of your rank and fortune, he will find it difficult to descend to his own station.

“ I look upon your lordship as his friend; in that light I presume to consult you. He loves gaming, I am afraid he injures his fortune by it. I beg the favour of your
lordship

lordship to check him, and to remind him of what he owes to himself and family."

My lord looked as if surprized at my plain dealing: he looked down, as if abashed; he was confused, uneasy, and restless. He rose up, and walked about the room, and was silent for several minutes.

He looked displeased; his face was in a glow; and, at last, he spoke—

"When I invited Mr. Darnford to my house, I did not expect to be charged with all the faults and follies he might commit under my roof: it is enough for me, to answer for my own."

"Very true, my lord: but, when he is always in your company, when he looks up to you as his friend and patron, a wife may perhaps be excused for imploring your influence with him; a wife, who cannot be wholly indifferent to his conduct."

My heart was full, I wept involuntarily. Lord A—— came to me, he dropt upon

one

one knee—"Forgive me, dear Mrs. Darnford; I fear I have given you pain; I see your distress, I pity your sincerity. Yes, Darnford does game deeply: I have tried to check him, but in vain. What do you wish me to do more? Tell me what I can do to serve you?"

"I will speak my wishes—Suffer us to go to a lodging more suitable to our fortune and situation, discourage my husband to frequent the gaming-table; do this, and I will bless and pray for you for ever!"

"I will, by Heaven, if you insist upon it!—But why will you not stay here till you leave London? I meant it to save expences to him and you: why are you so earnest to leave me?"

"My lord, I see and feel the impropriety: to your good sense, I need not say more."

"You shall be obeyed, Madam: you will not submit to owe any obligation to
me.

me. I think I see your motives, and I respect them, though they give me more pain than I dare express. You shall do as you please, but you will leave a sense of your merit engraved upon my heart in strong and indelible characters. Honour me with your confidence and friendship; I swear to deserve them, whatever it costs me."

He went out of the room with tears in his eyes; they seemed those of honour and sincerity. My heart was lighter; it threw off a part of its burthen. I prepared to meet the reproaches of Darnford, and to depart as soon as possible.

I went down to dinner: Lord A—— behaved more respectfully than ever. As soon as it was over, I retired to my apartment.

I saw Darnford no more till he came to bed, which was earlier than usual. He was in a very ill humour; he reproached me

me with perverseness and false delicacy; he found my illness was only a pretence to leave the house; I wanted him to go to some dog-hole or another, and to live in my own vulgar style; that I made him slight the friendship of Lord A——, to gratify my own humours.

When he had run himself out of breath, I asked him to let me go to Darnford Hall, and I would leave him at Lord A——'s, till he chose to come home.

“No, by G—! I should not have my own humour so far; I should stay in London as long as he did.”

I was silent.

After he had exhausted himself and his passion, he cooled all at once; he asked my pardon, and begged me to be friends with him.

I endeavoured to prepare myself for suffering, and resigned myself to it. I got but little sleep for several nights, and looked ill

and

and dejected. He tried to make me change my mind, but I was determined.

We went to look at lodgings; they were all too high for me, and too low for him. At last he took one in Bloomsbury Square, and we removed thither after staying two months at Lord A——'s.

His lordship took a polite and respectful leave of me. He asked my permission to visit me sometimes; I told him I should be honoured by his visits.

He hoped I would sometimes dine with him. I bowed assent.

We went to our lodgings: Darnford was fullen and silent.

I saw very little of him: he breakfasted at home, generally dined with Lord A——, and I saw him no more till his bed-time.

My time was now more my own. I went out before dinner. I visited my sister in the city: she received me very coldly. I asked her to come to me, but she declined it.

She

She

She threw out hints of Mr. Darnford's misconduct; that he was ruining himself very fast; that he had thrown them to a distance, and now they would keep it.

My evenings were very lonely and dull, but I had recourse to books: I sent to a circulating-library, and was furnished with all the new publications.

One night, or rather morning, Darnford came home: he threw himself into a great chair, instead of coming to bed. I had slept, and was awake.

I had always a light burning, and I saw that he was much disturbed.

He threw himself about, clasped his hands, and used many gesticulations.

He sighed deeply, and uttered words of anguish—"Curfed luck! D——n the dice! Oh, my head aches! Fanny says true; she is wiser than I. What of that? Shall she reproach my conduct?—O fool! blockhead! as that I am!—Well, 'tis no

no matter—A short life, and a merry one, for me!”

“From such mirth as your’s, Mr. Darnford, good Lord deliver me!”

“So, then, you heard me.—Don’t say another word, Fanny: if you do, I will go out again—I cannot bear preaching now.”

“Come to bed, and compose yourself.”

“Will you comfort me, instead of reproaching me?”

“I will, Mr. Darnford; and I will pray for you.”

“That is kind; for, indeed, I am unable to pray for myself.”

I soothed him to rest; but could take none myself, so much had he alarmed me.

He slept several hours, and awoke refreshed. He thanked me for the kindness with which I received him. He wished he had followed my advice: he sighed. He
confessed

confessed he had lost a large sum of money; he must sell an estate of value: could I forgive him?

I told him, if it was the last sin of the kind, I would forgive it; and, if poverty rendered him good and wise, I would welcome it's approach, and share it most cheerfully.

"Do not name poverty," said he: "I cannot bear it."

"I can, Mr. Darnford: it is not the worst of evils. We may, if it is not our own faults, render it a blessing to us."

"You are a blessing to me, Fanny; and I will put myself under your direction."

I was rejoiced to hear him speak so rationally; but I conjectured, that he must have suffered deeply, to be so much humbled.

I questioned him concerning the state of his affairs. He drew back, and would not tell me his true situation. I wondered

that he staid at home the whole day with me. I endeavoured to entertain him : I read Marmontel's Good Wife to him, to shew him that a woman might be trusted, and sometimes might extricate her husband from difficulties. He shook his head, and was silent.

In the course of the day, he received several letters, and sent answers to them. In the evening, he received one that seemed to make him easy.

" 'Tis over !" said he : " I have found a friend !"

" I am glad of it," said I ; " but, why will you not treat me like one ?"

" Yes, you are my friend ; but you could not have done for me what this person has."

I begged to know who it was ; but he would not tell me : he changed the subject. He was easy and chearful ; and the storm

storm seemed to be blown over for the present.

Lord A—— had frequently invited me to dinner: I went sometimes. He complained of my reserve and shyness. I renewed my solicitations, that he would give my husband good advice, and thus prove himself our friend. He sometimes was angry; at others, he promised to do as I wished him. He said, I over-rated his influence with Mr. Darnford; for he would not be advised, nor reproved.

Darnford behaved well a whole week. He never spent an evening from me: but he would not answer my enquiries; he would not let me know the true state of his affairs.

We dined with Lord A——, without any other company. My lord proposed that we should go to the third act of the play.

Darnford said—"Just as Frances pleases: I am now under her direction."

"I rejoice to hear it," said my lord. "The stool of repentance becomes you well."

"I don't understand that," said he: "I am not pleased to be thought so humble, neither."

"Don't be afraid of being thought too wise, Darnford. I should be proud to sit upon any seat, with such a companion by my side."

I was never pleased with my lord's compliments: I always put them aside. I answered, that, if Mr. Darnford liked it, I would go with them willingly.

The coach was ordered, and we went.

The play was, *The Fatal Marriage*.—Mrs. Siddons in the character of Isabella—the most heart-probing scene of distress: mine felt it too strongly. Lord A—— observed me; and, in the interval between

the

the acts, he said—"These tragic writers work up scenes of distress, that affect us too deeply; and, what is worse, they punish the most innocent and perfect characters the most severely."

"That is not the present case, my lord: Isabella is not a perfect character."

"No!—What crime has she committed?"

"That of perjury. She was a nun profest; she broke her vow, eloped, and married Biron. Perhaps you never saw or read the whole play?"

"Yes, I have; but I have forgot it."

"Permit me to remind you. Count Baldwin, when she appeals to Heaven, thus answers her—

"How dare you mention Heav'n!—Call to mind
Your perjur'd vows; your plighted, broken faith,
To Heav'n and all things holy.—Were you not
Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
The sacred habit on, profest and sworn
A votary for ever?"

“ Then, Madam, why do you weep for her ?”

“ Because, though she is guilty enough to be blamed, she is innocent enough to be pitied. Such are the proper subjects of tragedy ; and Southern shewed his knowledge of human nature, by selecting them. A perfect character raises our admiration : a mixed one is more common and more natural, and engages our pity and our sympathy.”

My lord praised my remarks extravagantly, and said they were of more value than the play.

I told him, I was more mortified than gratified by undue compliments ; that it reflected upon his own judgment, as the remarks were common, and not originally my own. He seemed abashed, and stood corrected.

After the play was over, we returned in my lord's coach, and supped at his house.

There

There was a good deal of light and frothy conversation upon the subject of the play. Darnford asked me, what I should have done in Isabella's situation.—I said, I believed I should have lost my senses, as she did; and in that situation I should not have been accountable for my actions: that our stage abounded in suicides, and I thought it was of bad tendency; that the pride of human nature revolted against sufferings of every kind; but those who professed to be Christians, ought to expect them, and to prepare to meet them.

The gentlemen said, I was too serious: they did not like the turn I gave to the conversation.

We did not part till a late hour. Darnford said, since I liked plays, he would attend me to another, whenever I pleased.

I looked over the play-bills, in order to pick out one that might be likely to make some impression upon his mind, as

It seemed now to be fluctuating between right and wrong.

The *Gamester* was announced for the Thursday following. I burnt the play-bill, that he might not see what it was. I did not ask him to go, till I met him at dinner. He said—"With all my heart.—What is the play?"

I asked the servant for the bill: luckily he had not seen it. It could not be found. I said, it was no matter; we would take our chance.

He was always dilatory; but I hurried him, as I wished him to be there before the play began. We got there in time, as I wished.

He was attentive to the play. He sat uneasy upon his seat, and I perceived that he felt it. As the catastrophe approached, he was more agitated. He asked me, who wrote this play: I told him, Mr. Moore. He said, it seemed to him

him as if I had written it; for it spoke my sentiments. I said, I was proud to think and to speak like this author. The last act was too much for him: he grasped my hand; he trembled—"Oh, God! I cannot bear this!—Why did you bring me here?"

I whispered in his ear—"To touch your heart, to serve you, and to save you."

"You chose it, then!—You have torn my heart asunder!"

I answered, in the words of Hamlet—"Oh, throw away the worser part of it, and live the better with the other half!"

"Let me go home!"

"You shall, presently; and I will go with you."

I had ordered the carriage and the servants to be ready, in hopes to get him to go home at the end of the play, that he

might not lose the benefit of the impression.

We went home accordingly. Darnford was deeply affected ; but he shewed it in a way that proved his inconsistency.

As soon as he began to recover his spirits, he shewed anger against me : I had laid a plot to torment and vex him ; he hated plays—they were vulgar amusements ; he had not been at any this year, till Lord A—— carried him to one ; and he went to this to oblige me, and I had repaid him for it.

I kept silence, and let him run himself out of breath. Then he paused.

I said, if I had given him pain, it was in order to save him from greater ; and I hoped there would come a time, when he would thank me for it.

He had vented his uneasiness ; he grew fullen, and would not answer.

I went

I went to bed uneasy ; and a thousand painful apprehensions came over me. I was going to rise again, when I heard him coming up stairs. He came softly, supposing me to be asleep. He came to bed. He spoke not any more ; but I heard him sigh often.

I prayed earnestly, that this impression might lead him to reform his conduct, and to be good and happy.

Ever since we had been at lodgings, there had been a constant succession of people, every morning, knocking at the door. They enquired for Mr. Darnford ; they left letters, and messages, and bills : I found they were an army of duns.

Our upper servant was a sober and sensible man. He always seemed unwilling to tell me the business of these people ; and he seemed concerned for me.

I was preparing myself for the worst that could happen: I expected it, and could not be surprized at any thing.

Several men called on Darnford the next day after the play: he went to them in the parlour, and staid with them some time.

When he met me at dinner, he behaved with his usual politeness, and as if nothing disagreeable had passed. I followed his lead, and endeavoured to entertain and amuse him. I played *picquet* with him in the evening, and was agreeably surprized to find that he seemed to have no wish to go from home.

He apologized for what he had said in anger. "Oh, that play!" said he; "I wish I had seen it two years ago: but now it has opened a vein in my heart, and it bleeds to no purpose."

I said, I hoped it was to good purpose, and that he would be the better man ever after.

Still

Still he kept at home.

I asked him to go with me to a comedy; but he said—"No more plays of any kind: I have done with them."

A few days after, I received an anonymous letter, in these terms—

"A PERSON, who knows Mrs. Darnford's merit and character, wishes to prepare her for a cloud that hangs over her head, and is ready to burst upon her. Mr. Darnford has sold all his estates that are in his power to sell; Darnford Hall, and the estates about it, are entailed upon a male heir; and, unless Mr. Darnford has a son, they will go to his cousin, James Darnford, Esq. so that he can neither sell nor mortgage them; but he may anticipate the revenue of those estates, so that they may be sequestered during his life. If this person is rightly informed, Mrs. Darnford will shortly be desired to set her hand to a writing, by which she will give up her jointure;

jointure; which if she does, she is undone. She is advised to be resolute and steady in her refusal. This warning comes from a friend, who regards her for the sake of her worthy father, and esteems her for her own conduct under the most trying situations.

“BENEVOLUS.”

Thus warned, I resigned myself to my fate, and begged of Heaven to strengthen my mind to support it properly.

I conjectured that this letter came from my father's executor; and I was not mistaken. A few days afterward, Mr. Darnford told me, that some gentlemen were to breakfast with him, and desired my company.

He said, he had always found me generous and kind to him, upon all occasions; that he was under some difficulties, and his estates were so tied up, that he could not sell them: therefore he must ask the fa-
your

your of me to set my hand to a writing, which would enable him to sell an estate that would set him clear of the world; and afterwards, he was resolved to retrench, and to do every thing I could desire of him.

I said, I would consider of it.

“ I am thinking of something that will extricate you from your present difficulties. You know the thousand pounds which my father left, were lodged in the banker’s hands : use that to free you from your difficulties.”

He turned pale, and his lips quivered. He said, that would not be sufficient.

“ What, then, do you require of me ?”

He was silent.

“ You do not, I presume, ask me to give up my settlement, which is all that is left to support me !—You cannot be so base as to ask it !”

He was silent, and in confusion.

“ Unhappy

“ Unhappy man ! I will spare you the shame of uttering this request ; and I will tell you, if that is your meaning, I will not comply with it : I will keep that, to support you and myself, and to keep us above absolute poverty. Go to your gentlemen, and tell them so.”

He retired in silence. He never came home the whole night. I spent it in prayer, and in arming myself with a strong resolution.

The next morning, he came in while I was at breakfast, pale as death, and in much confusion.

I asked, how he did.

“ Bad enough !” was his answer.

“ I am sorry for it.”

“ What, Madam, would you advise me to do ?”

“ Go directly into the country with me.”

“ I cannot go till my affairs are settled.”

“ That

"That will never be. I have no other advice to give you."

He went out again, and came home no more all that day and night.

He came to dinner, the following day, with a more chearful countenance. He told me, he had a propofal made him, and came to consult me upon it.

I faid, my beft advice was always at his fervice.

He faid, a gentleman of very large fortune was going to France and Italy, and wanted a travelling companion; that he had invited him to go with him; that he faw my regard for him was at an end, and that I could fpare his company; and therefore he was inclined to go.

I faid, he was very unjuft and ungrateful, to fay fo; that I had offered to fhare his lot in poverty, as well as in riches; that many people were rich and independent with two hundred a year; that I could be
eafy

easy and contented with it; and, if he would suffer me to manage it, I would promise that he should want none of the comforts of life: but, if he preferred being a rich man's toad-eater to that situation, he was free to pursue his own inclinations, only not to impute it to me, since it was entirely his own act and deed.

It was with some difficulty that I avoided all reproaches; and, in all that I said, only adverted to the future.

In the evening, he went out again, and staid all night. I had many struggles in my own mind; but I left it to him to decide his future situation.

Lord A—— called on Mr. Darnford. He was not at home. He asked for me, and I received him.

He enquired into the particulars of my husband's situation.

I said, he was probably better informed
than

than I was : I only knew that he was ruined.

Lord A—— offered me any services in his power. I thanked him, but declined them.

He called me an inflexible woman, who would not condescend to receive any act of friendship, or to owe an obligation to any one.

I said, I could not wish to owe obligations, and least of all to gentlemen ; that I was amply provided for, and as rich as I desired.

He said, Mr. Darnford would go abroad for a few years, till his affairs were, in some degree, retrieved ; and that he had recommended him to Mr. Bryantone, and he thought it would be a pleasant connection for them both ; that Darnford had promised him to leave off gaming entirely ; that he was now convinced of his errors, and would certainly reform—Did I mean
to

to leave London soon? where did I purpose to go?

“I shall not go till poor Darnford does, which I suppose will be soon.”

He begged pardon for his curiosity: he had something to propose for mine and Darnford's service.

I begged him to speak it.

“I have been thinking that Darnford Hall might be let to very good account, ready-furnished. I know a gentleman who is very likely to take it for a summer residence. In that case, I should beg of you, Madam, to accept of my cottage, for this summer at least. I should only come thither as your guest, and at such times only as were convenient to you. Pray consider, before you refuse me the honour of accommodating you for a few months. Do not look offended. I offer it in the sincerity of my heart, and with all the warmth and purity of friendship.

I was

I was inflexible, as he called me; I would not accept any favour from him.

I thought I saw the cloven-foot appear; but I would not let him perceive that I did.

I thanked him for his solicitude to serve us. I approved very much of his proposal to let the Hall ready-furnished. I begged him to mention it to Mr. Darnford, and I would second it.

“ But then, Madam, what becomes of you?”

“ I shall find a place to board in suitable to my situation.”

He tried, by every kind of argument, to induce me to go to the cottage; but in vain.

He looked angry, but prudently restrained himself from speaking in that style. He went away before Darnford returned.

My husband now was all penitence and humility: he really seemed reluctant to leave me. He begged me to write to him
often:

often: he hoped we should meet again, and happier hours would succeed.

He had given me money several times, when he was in a run of luck. I now divided it with him: he swore I was an angel; and he was unworthy to be my servant.

Our parting was affecting on both sides. He went with Mr. Bryanstone to Dover, and from thence to France.

He had sold the chariot and horses, and discharged the coachman and footman. The upper-servant desired to continue with me; but I told him, I should not in future keep a man-servant. I asked if he had received his wages: he said, "No, but he would wait till it was quite convenient for me." I was surprized at the man's disinterestedness; but I paid him instantly.

I next spoke to the landlady, and found she was paid up to the present week. I packed up my clothes and linen; and discharged

charged my own maid-servant, who was much too fine a lady for me.

I kept my other maid, who was the under house-maid when at the Hall, but now was every thing to me: I sent her to the inn, to take places for us in the stage-coach to N——, and in three days time I turned my back upon London.

Lord A—— had called several times—
“Not at home!” was the answer. I chose not to see any company nor to go any where; but spent my time in preparing for my journey, and in laying plans for my future conduct. Before I left London, I wrote to Lord A——, and kept the copy of my letter—

“MY LORD,

“I CANNOT leave London without paying my acknowledgments to your lordship for the many acts of friendship which Mr. Darnford and myself have received

ceived from you. We gladly agree to your lordship's proposal of letting Darnford Hall; and I am impowered to treat upon this subject with any person that it may suit, of which you gave me some reason to hope. I shall be ready to quit it by Midsummer, or sooner, if required.

“ Perhaps some part of my conduct may appear ungrateful to your lordship; but when you reflect that I am particularly circumstanced; and that, having imbibed unfashionable principles, I am more solicitous to acquit myself to them, than to what is called the world, or the first circle of it, I hope I shall stand excused. I am, nevertheless, very sensible of the favours which my husband and I have received from your lordship; and am your lordship's most humble servant,

“ F. DARNFORD.”

I ordered

I ordered this letter to be sent the morning after I left London, and when I should be out of the reach of all it's dangers.

Darnford Hall appeared unpleasant to me, from the consciousness that it was no longer my home, and that I must seek a new one.

You remember my pupil, of whom I spoke, Betsy Moyle. Her parents lived in an old mansion-house, which had formerly been the residence of an ancient family: the estate, like others, had passed through many different hands, and was now tenanted by these worthy people.

I intended to board with them: I proposed it, and they consented.

They were surprized to hear of the alteration in my circumstances; and feared they could not accommodate me according to my degree.

I chose a parlour and a bed-chamber;

and amused myself with fitting it up to receive myself; and my servant, a poor cottager's daughter, whom I had taken as a house-maid. She was now my attendant; the cook remained with me for a time, and I discharged all the rest.

I had my apartment at Moyle's new painted, which made it look light and chearful. I furnished it in the plainest manner. I put a small canopy-bed into the chamber, for my servant to be near me; and I waited with some impatience to hear of a tenant for the Hall.

The rector of the parish visited me: he offered me his services; he invited me to his house, and his wife behaved in the most friendly manner.

This kindness was unmerited by me; for Darnford would never suffer me to be intimate with them, but barely to keep up an external civility towards them.

They had heard that I was going to
board

board at Moyle's; and they offered to take me into their family, if I preferred it. I thanked them for their kindness; but told them I had fitted up an apartment at Moyle's, and agreed with him for my board, and could not go back unless for some powerful cause: that I hoped to be their neighbour there, and to deserve their goodness to me.

At length I received a packet of letters from Lord A——, containing one from himself, one from my husband, and the third from the amiable Lady B——. I here enclose them.

“ MADAM,

“ THOUGH you disdain my friendship, and spurn at the shadow of an obligation to me; I will follow you with my good offices, and do every thing that is likely to give you pleasure. I have seen Lady B——, and we have spoken of you; she loves and esteems you: perhaps you

may accept her services, though you reject mine. Strange! that my sex should place me in an unfavourable light; and that her's should entitle her to your confidence!

“ I send you a letter from Darnford; and beg you to send your answer to me, and I will transmit it to him.

“ I have spoken to Mr. Frampton, and he will soon come down to look at your house; and, if it will suit his family, he will take it. I would attend him, if you would invite me; but I do not expect it, because you shun the sight of me. I am, as much as you will permit me to be, your faithful friend and servant,

“ A———.”

“ DEAR FANNY,

“ HERE I am in the city of Paris, which the French chatter of, as if it was the first in the world; but I do not think it is in any degree equal to London. The
people

people I like well enough, for you know we keep the *best company*. I like their cookery; for you know I always loved made dishes: but they give you a loin of mutton, and call it *a roast beef*. The wine is good, and I do it honour.

“ I play very little, and only for trifles; but Fortune is always a jade to me. Mr. Bryanstone is reckoned a very fine gentleman; but I do not think him equal to Lord A——. Perhaps he may have more learning than he; but then, in polite accomplishments, he is much superior.

“ I am sure my lord is my true friend. He has promised to use his interest to get me a place; and then I shall hire a small house near the office I belong to, and we shall live comfortably. I will limit my expences, and you shall be my steward; and I will never play for more than a limited sum: you shall direct me, and advise me, and we will never part more.

“ There is a certain Mr. Wilton, Mr. Bryanstone’s companion and friend, a clergyman, and very learned and wise in his own opinion. This Mr. Wilton takes upon him to reprove and correct me, and behaves very impertinently to me, and I can hardly bear it.

“ When I appeal to Bryanstone, he tells me, I must submit to a man of letters, who knows better than me; and that he prefers Wilton’s judgment to his own. They make me appear as if I was very ignorant in comparison of them; and I do not feel myself easy with them: however, I shall bear it for a time, in hope to be recalled, as soon as Lord A—— can provide for me.

“ I am sorry, my Fanny, that you are prejudiced against this amiable man; but I hope there will come a time when you will know how to value his friendship. Write to me often; tell me every thing that concerns me to know, particularly about yourself.

“ Send

“ Send your letters, under cover, to Lord A——, and he will forward them to me.

“ Keep up your spirits, and hope for better days. Be assured of the constant and inviolable affection of—

“ Your faithful husband,

PARIS. “ GEORGE DARNFORD.”

“ P.S. I have a new suit of Paris cloaths.”

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ I SHOULD certainly have waited on you, as soon as you went to lodgings ; but was obliged to leave town at that time, to visit a very dear relation, who was dangerously ill—an aunt, who was so good as to supply the place of a mother to me, at the time when I most wanted one, from my leaving school till I was married. I have had the happiness to leave her quite recovered, and to please myself with the

thoughts, that my tender attentions have in some degree contributed towards it.

“ My cares are now directed to a still dearer object. My lord is in an ill state of health: he is advised to go to Italy. I would go to the world’s end to restore him; and, out of question, I attend him, and am his first nurse and companion.

“ The first time I saw Lord A—, after my return to town, he told me of the surprizing alteration in your circumstances and situation. I was very much concerned for you. I saw, from the first moment I knew you, that your mind was not easy, and I judged that you were unfortunate, but not blameable. I forbear to speak my opinion of Mr. Darnford, because he is your husband: I hear he is gone abroad with Mr. Bryanstone; but what becomes of you in the mean time? Will you do me the favour to give me your company while I stay at my country-seat,
and

and to go with us to the Continent? Consider of this proposal, and be assured that it comes from the heart.

“ Lord A—— is mortified, that you will accept no favour from him. He shewed me your letter to him before you left London. I comprehend your motives, and honour you for your guarded conduct. You can have no such scruples towards me. Permit me the honour to be your friend; and, under that title, accept the trifle I enclose.

“ My lord unites with me in every sentiment of esteem and friendship. Direct to me in Portman Square; and believe me truly, dear Madam, your sincere friend and humble servant,

“ LOUISA B——.”

Here, my friend, I will conclude my enormous packet, which I shall send by Patty. During her absence, I shall be preparing another, which I shall send to

W——, by the person who fetches her home.

You must make me the return of your own story, from the time of our separation.

I am, yours truly,

FRANCES DARNFORD.

LETTER

LETTER V.

MRS. DARNFORD. IN CONTINUATION.

I Answered Lord A——'s letter first. I thanked him for his kind attention to Mr. Darnford's interest. I told him, I was ready to receive the gentleman, as soon as was convenient to him to come down; that my principles did not allow me to invite single men to visit me in my husband's absence; I hoped he would excuse my frankness, or else that he would impute it to my vulgar prejudices, which were not to be subdued.

I enclosed a letter to Darnford, which was as follows.

" I AM surprized, Mr. Darnford, that your past misconduct, and your sufferings in consequence of it, have not corrected that light and frivolous turn of mind

which gives all it's attention to trifles, and neglects things of the first importance.

“ What signifies it to me, how you eat and drink, or what cloaths you wear? You play still, then—and for trifles, because you have not money to play deeper: great virtue and self-denial in that !

“ Your utmost ambition is to be in a state of dependance on others. This is a mean and abject spirit.

“ I had hoped you were studying how to be industrious and independent; to retrieve the time and fortune you have so cruelly mispent.

“ You were bred to the law: perhaps, if you had practised it, you might now have been in an easy and comfortable situation; but the addition of your uncle's estate made you vain, idle, and dissipated.

“ You are still young enough to pursue your original destination. Put yourself under the direction of some lawyer of eminence ;

eminence; study hard; be honest and diligent. Pursue this course, and you may retrieve your fortune and character, and become a good member of society.

“ If you do not, but continue idle and expensive, you will become the contempt of all mankind, as I perceive you are to your present companions.

“ Come home to me, poor, honest, and industrious, and I will welcome you to my arms, and to my heart : but, if you continue in your present sentiments, I will seek my fortune by myself.

“ If Lord A—— should provide for you in the way you mention, take notice, that I will not live with you in London. I hate the city, and defy all it's temptations.

“ I beg you to find out some other method of conveyance; for I do not chuse that all our letters should pass through the hands of Lord A——.

“ You value yourself upon keeping the
best

best company, who have led you to dissipation and ruin : but you have not yet learned wherein consists the true spirit of a gentleman ; it is, in being superior to every thing mean, selfish, and unworthy.

“ Learn and confess this truth, and I will call myself your faithful and affectionate wife,

“ F. DARNFORD.”

I should have told you, that Lady B——’s letter covered two Bank-notes, of fifty pounds each.

I paid my best acknowledgments for her unmerited friendship and kindness. I declined her proposal, because I feared poor Darnford would have need of me, and I could not give him up entirely.

I would not refuse all her favours, and therefore I kept one of the notes, but returned the other, assuring her that I was not in want of money, nor at present likely to be : I wished to preserve her invaluable
friendship ;

friendship; and there might be a time when I might be permitted to converse with her personally. In the mean while, I begged her to honour me with her correspondence.

I wrote to Counsellor M——, my father's executor. I told him my past and present situation; I desired his advice and assistance in regard to letting the Hall, and what price I should ask for it.

He answered me, very kindly, that, as soon as I knew when the gentleman would come down, I should let him know, and he would meet him there.

Mr. Frampton wrote word by his steward, that he would come to Darnford Hall the following week. I gave notice to Mr. M——, and he came the day before.

Mr. Frampton brought with him another gentleman, and his steward, who was an attorney.

They talked over the business with Mr.

M——;

M——; and, after some altercation, Mr. Frampton took the house for three years certain, ready furnished, with all the land about it, the farming stock and cattle, and every thing upon the premises; conditioning to leave every thing, in all respects, as good as he found it.

I had before-hand taken a few necessaries for my own use, and sent them to my new lodgings, where every thing was prepared for my reception; and I agreed to give up the house the week following.

Mr. M—— assured me, that Darnford had still many debts unpaid; but he did not know the extent of them. He advised me to set apart the rent of the Hall and farm; and, at every year's end, to pay off so much of the debts.

I begged him to enquire into them, and to send me an account of them.

I offered to pay him for his services; but he resolutely refused to accept it, saying,

M——

ing, he was over-paid by the satisfaction it gave him to serve a daughter of Mr. Lawson, whom her relations had abandoned to her ill fortune. He desired me to consult him as often as I should have occasion.

As soon as the gentlemen left Darnford Hall, I removed into my new lodgings, where I was joyfully received by Mr. Moyle and his family. My old pupil desired to receive new lessons from me; and her two sisters envying her advantages, I taught them all.

I thought I perceived in myself a talent for the education of youth; and I resolved, if I should be reduced to indigence, to undertake something of this sort.

I read many books of this kind; I wrote remarks on ~~them~~; I drew plans of seminaries of education. In short, I endeavoured to qualify myself for this employment; and one of my plans was afterwards realized.

I was

I was not unhappy in this situation, excepting when Darnford came across my thoughts. I pitied him, but could no longer esteem him: and I confess, at times, something too much like contempt for him arose in my mind; but I checked it, and resolved to fulfil my duty, however painful and distressing it might be to me.

Mr. Frampton's family came to the Hall. They had acquired a fortune in India. They were proud and stately, assuming the style, and expecting the homage, of princes.

If Darnford's pride gave offence, think what these, his successors, gave! It put people upon enquiring after their origin. They discovered that Mr. Frampton and his wife were both adventurers: that they were nursed in the bosom of Indigence; and that, being raised to affluence, they knew not how to behave to others, less fortunate,

fortunate, but not less deserving, than themselves.

I doubted whether to visit them or not: my pride came to my assistance, and turned the scale. Should I keep back from visiting them, it might seem as if I thought myself of too inferior a degree to aspire to their acquaintance. They shall not think so; I will shew them the contrary.

Oh, my friend! how often does pride turn the scale of our actions! even the best have too often a tinge of it! "*Pride is the Serpent's egg, laid in the hearts of all, but only hatched by fools and wicked men.*" Would one think this sentence was written by a madman, in the midst of a thousand follies and impertinencies? Yes, it was; by crazy Johnson, the author of *Hurlothrumbo*: yet many rational men have never said any thing so good in their whole lives. Many endeavour to conceal this quality; but it will always break out
at

at some time or other. I think it better to confess mine, and to claim the allowance due to ingenuoufness.

The latent feeds of pride being thus stirred up, I visited the Framptons.

Madame was a large woman, with a look of self-consequence about her, that impressed an idea of itself upon common beholders. She affected a kind of dignity that imposed upon them; but, to those who looked beyond the surface, she seemed a vessel of pride, whose reverberation proclaimed it's emptiness. Had a modest and diffident mind inhabited that body, it would have been overlooked; but the consequence it gave itself, made it be distinguished; and she was called a fine woman.

Mr. Frampton was very like, for a man, what his lady was for a woman. "*A man of my fortune! a man of my consequence!*" were the words ofteneft in his mouth: and
he

he seemed to despise the house, as not suitable to a man of his fortune, though it was known that he had lived in a cottage in his childhood, and wanted most of the comforts and conveniencies of life.

This great couple had two sons, and three daughters. They kept a private tutor for the young gentlemen, and a French governess for the young ladies; and they were to be fashionably educated.

The eldest daughter was the copy of her mother.

The second had a look of modesty and good sense, but was brow-beaten and kept back, lest she should obscure the merit of her elder sister. This was, in fact, of great advantage to her, as it obliged her to take some pains to make herself agreeable.

The third daughter was a disagreeable, chattering, impertinent thing, whose tongue never lay still, and yet never spoke to any purpose.

The

The boys were forward, ignorant, and under-bred.

This is a brief sketch of the family.

They received me with a kind of insolent condescension, which seemed to say—
“ Though I am your superior, I will deign to take notice of you.” I have met with this behaviour often, since I was in reduced circumstances.

Mrs. Frampton told me of the absurd pomp and state in which she had lived when in India ; the number of attendants by which she was surrounded ; her various dresses, her fine palanquins, her jewels, and ornaments. Every thing that she had met in England was poor and mean, in comparison. Then, the great people that visited them in London ; the respect that was paid them by every body : in short, that they were a family of the first consequence, and had expectations of being ennobled.

I wished

I wished that she had a printed catalogue of all her superlatives, to have given to each of her visitors, to have spared her the trouble of detailing them, and them that of hearing them.

She seemed to recollect herself afterwards. She found I expressed neither surprise nor admiration, and that all her magnificence was lost upon me.

She let me know that I was a very early visitor. When the cards were brought, I begged to be excused playing; and, as soon as they were set down to Whist, and their attention fully engaged, I took leave, and retired, heartily tired with my visit.

One day, the week following, Mrs. Frampton and her daughter called upon me. They were attended by one of those hangers-on with which they were perpetually surrounded; a made-up thing, that called itself a *gentleman*.

The ladies invited me to dine with them
on

on the Thursday. I thanked them for the honour they did me, but begged leave to decline it. I told them, that I was an old-fashioned woman, and that I adhered to early hours of eating and sleeping; that fashionable hours did not agree with my health, spirits, or situation; that I could not disturb the family I lived with, nor break the rest of any of their servants.

They were surprized to hear me talk in this way; for they understood that I had lived in the *world*.

“ Yes, ladies,” said I, “ so I have, for seven-and-twenty years; yet I never conformed to the manners of the fashionable part of it. I am sometimes thought singular in mine; but I do not wish to be thought so. I only live to my own feelings and principles. I do not pretend to impose them upon others.

“ You will not, then, dine with us, *Mistress Darnford* ?” (she spoke it thus.)

“ I had

“ I had rather breakfast with you, Madam, if you will permit me.”

“ Well, do as you please. We breakfast at twelve ; but every body comes and goes as they like ; and the things stand upon the table till two, or after.”

“ I will wait on you, Madam, on Friday, if it is agreeable.”

“ Yes, do ; come on Friday. You must see my daughter’s ingenious works, and hear her play on the *forte piano*, and such like. I am told that you can draw and paint, and write very well : and you must make acquaintance with my young folks ; for I hear a very good character of you, and that you had no share in your husband’s extravagance.”

I made no reply to this compliment, as she thought it.

My room was neat and plain ; but it was ornamented with my own drawings and paintings ; and my husband’s picture,

done by myself, was over the chimney. They seemed surprized at the execution of them; and I found they knew little or nothing of the arts they talked of.

I wished not to offend the Framptons: therefore I went to breakfast with them on the Friday.

They received me in the dressing-room, where I used to breakfast, and pursue my little works of fancy.

They were surrounded by a set of parasites and hangers-on, who fed them continually with flattery so gross that none but such self-admirers could digest it.

Among these was a young man of a superior kind. He looked and spoke like a gentleman; and his compliments had an air of irony, which I wondered they did not perceive. His name was Wilmot.

After breakfast, Miss Frampton was requested to play and sing. She did both very poorly; but she was praised above measure.

measure. Her mother said, she only wanted a little more courage; but I thought she had no such want.

The second lady played an easy lesson much better than her sister.

I was asked to take my turn, but declined it.

Mr. Wilmot urged me. I said, I could not play after Miss Frampton. He looked at me with an expression that I understood plainly, but did not seem to do.

There was an air of freedom and familiarity in his manner, that did not please me; and I determined to discourage it.

Mrs. Frampton commended my skill in drawing, and my pictures. Mr. Wilmot begged he might be permitted to see them. I said, that, during my husband's absence, I received no visits from gentlemen.

"With us, you will suffer him to call upon you," said Miss Frampton, who seemed to look on Wilmot as her admirer.

I was pressed to spend the day ; but I chose to return by Mr. Moyle's hour of dinner. Mr. Wilmot offered to attend me home, but I would not suffer it.

The next morning, he called on me, but was not admitted. He left a nosegay of the finest flowers. From this time, I was disturbed with the continual visits of this Mr. Wilmot, who sent me a nosegay every morning.

I never saw him but when he came with the ladies from the Hall. He then saw my drawings and paintings. He did not praise them extravagantly ; but, turning to me, he said, in a low voice—" Merit like yours, Madam, is superior to flattery, and above praise ; but I pay that homage which it best deserves." He put his hand upon his heart, and bowed gracefully.

The ladies were attentive to the pictures, and he observed it. His behaviour to me was very different from his attentions to them :

them: it was respectful and modest; and shewed politeness of manners, and an improved understanding.

Some days after, in a walk to the Street, as it was called, Mr. Wilmot overtook me. Sally Moyle was with me; for I never walked out without some companion.

He accosted me politely; and, after some conversation, he begged me to permit him to visit me. He said, he had often been honoured with the acquaintance of accomplished women, and wondered that I should be scrupulous of receiving him.

I answered, that I was particularly circumstanced; that my husband was gone abroad, and I had my character to guard by myself; that I was not blind to merit; that his company and conversation would be very agreeable to me, if Mr. Darnford was at home to share them with me; but,

in my situation, I ought to abstain from all appearance of evil.

He confessed that my conduct was right and commendable, but lamented the effects of it.

He ridiculed the Framptons with some humour. I rallied him upon his behaviour towards them, and his applauses of Miss Frampton : I said, what could I think of his sincerity ?

He answered—" Try it by your own, my dear Madam. Why did you say, you could not play after Miss Frampton, and deny us the pleasure of hearing you ?"

" I can answer you fairly, Sir. Supposing I do play better than Miss Frampton, (which is more than you can know) would it have been wise in me to excel her, and to raise her envy and jealousy, and perhaps to incur the resentment of the whole family ? I did not wish to shine at their
 expence,

expenſe, nor to attract notice: it is my wiſh to ſhun it; and I beg you ſo far to comply with it, as not to be ſeen in my company without that of the family.”

He ſaid, he would obey me, whatever it coſt him; and he would ſhorten his viſit to the Hall, for that reaſon.

As ſoon as we came within ſight of the Street, I took leave, and begged him to return.

He retired with great reluctance, and often looked back after me.

I had many invitations to the Hall, but declined them as often as I could without offence. I forbore to walk out on an evening, excepting in the grounds belonging to Mr. Moyle's farm.

I amused myſelf with various employments. I enjoyed the beauties of nature; and obſerved them, in their reſpective ſeaſons, with encreaſed reverence and adoration.

I had several letters from Darnford. He complained of my severity; he protested against the law, as a dry and disagreeable study; he grew tired of his company; they ridiculed his manners and character; he was tired of this new mode of idleness, and knew not what next to try; but he could not find any employment or resource.

Darnford's letters came always under covers from Lord A——. I made short answers, and such as any person might see without injury to either of us; recommending integrity, industry, and independence.

I received a letter from Mr. Wilmot, as follows—

“MADAM,

“EVERY word of yours goes directly to the heart; and I feel more concern to acquit myself to you, than to any person living. You accused me of insincerity: I
will

will endeavour to clear myself of this charge, before I leave this country. I came to Darnford Hall with a design to pay my addresses to Miss Frampton. I had been told, that she was an accomplished and amiable young woman; that her father would give her twenty thousand pounds in his life-time, and a farther expectation at his death. I confess that the latter consideration was not without it's weight; but it was not sufficient to induce me to give my hand to Miss Frampton. I hope I have too much honour and principle to marry a woman whom I cannot esteem. During my visit at the Hall, I saw a woman whom I admire above any I ever saw in my life; and, was she at liberty to accept my vows, I would offer them to-morrow. I am denied the liberty to visit her; but she shall see my heart, before I bid her an eternal adieu. Her honour, and her peace, are dearer to me than

my own. May she be happy, whatever becomes of me ! She is peculiarly circumstanced : and so am I ; who see a gem of inestimable value thrown away upon a man who is insensible of it's price, and unworthy to possess it. I beg you, Madam, to tell this charming woman, who is well known to you, that I shall never cease to love her, to bless her, and to pray for her, so long as I have any existence. May every blessing Heaven can bestow, light upon her head !—So prays, and departs, her admirer, friend, and servant,

“ J. C. WILMOT.”

This letter gave me pain : I wished I had never seen it. I will confess to my friend, that I never saw a man more to my taste than Mr. Wilmot. There was soul in every glance of his eye, and grace in every motion and attitude.

I rejoiced when he left the Hall, and wished never to see or hear of him, from
that

that day forward to the end of my life : yet he would sometimes intrude upon my thoughts.

I left London the 20th of May, and spent my time as I have related, during the months of June, July, and August; on the last day of which, I was surprized by an unexpected visit from Mr. Darnford.

I suppose that I received him coldly; for he complained of it, saying—"I thought my Fanny would have been glad to see me, after so long an absence."

"I should be glad to see you, Mr. Darnford, if you were come to any end or purpose. Are your affairs finally settled?"
—No, they were not.

"What, then, do you propose to do?"
—Lord A—— had a place in his eye, and was soliciting for him: in the mean time, he had given him an apartment in his house; they were come to the cottage, and should go a-shooting on the morrow.

“ And what next are you to do ? ”—No reply to that.

“ Lord A—— hopes you will come to us at the cottage, and spend a few weeks there.”

“ Indeed, I will not.”

“ Then I shall live there all day, and come to sleep with you here.”

“ No, Sir, I do not consent to that. If you were the occupier of the meanest cottage, and lived as a cottager ought to do, I would be your companion, and your servant ; but, while you are a voluntary dependant and hanger-on to others, I refuse to share your lot. Seek your fortune in your own way, as I will do mine in another.”

He seemed vexed and mortified : yet he kept talking to, and playing with, two young spaniels which he brought with him ; and sometimes addressed himself to me, at others to them.

I was

I was sitting at a desk ; and he saw I had been writing.

“ You are writing, perhaps, for the press.”

“ I do not know that. While you are educating puppies, I am endeavouring to qualify myself to educate human creatures. Perhaps Lord A—— will promote you to be the master of his dog-kennel.”—I was damnably severe ; it was more than he could bear.

“ Yes, you can bear worse things than that. You could bear the contempt of Mr. Bryanstone and his friend ; yet it did not stimulate you to aim at activity and independence.”

“ No, Madam ; I left them because I could not bear such treatment.”

“ And you come home to the same situation with Lord A——.”

“ Well, Madam, what then ? Do you wish to see me a day-labourer ?”

“ The

“The poorest husbandman in the village is a better member of society, and a more respectable man, than you, Mr. Darnford.”

This made him angry. I wished to stir the lethargy of indifference. I preached, as he called it, till he went away; saying, he hoped, the next time he called, to find me in a better temper.

The next day, at noon, Lord A——’s servant brought a leash of partridges, and the following note—

“LORD A—— and Mr. Darnford request Mrs. Darnford’s acceptance of their morning’s game. They will do themselves the pleasure to sup with her, at nine o’clock, if not forbidden. To them it will be a dinner, as they shall not return home till near that hour. They desire Mrs. D—— will provide nothing else.”

I sent

I sent word, I should be glad to see them. I almost repented of my harshness to Darnford; and yet his indifference to his own affairs provoked me to speak as I did.

In the evening, Lord A——'s servants brought a French pye, fruit-tarts, six bottles of wine, knives and forks, &c.

The butler said, his lord begged I would excuse this liberty, knowing that my conveniencies of this kind were left at the Hall. I was not pleased with this freedom; but I would not quarrel with him: I would allow it once, but forbid it the next time it was offered.

They came between eight and nine. Darnford paid me as much respect as if I had been a duchess. "Lord bless me!" thought I, "if this man had married a shrew, she would have had more influence over him, and perhaps might have used it to better purpose."

Lord

Lord A—— addressed me with his usual politeness, and paid me many compliments on my good looks, and afterwards upon my lodgings: he had heard they were mean ones; but I made every place delightful that I honoured with my presence.

I begged him to wave compliments, and to speak the plain language of the country to a poor cottager like me.

I was rather constrained in my behaviour, and kept them at a polite distance.

They talked of the sports of the field, the goodness of the season, and such kind of subjects.

Darnford enquired, how the family at the Hall had behaved to me. I said, very well; they had paid me every kind of civility.

He said, they complained of my shyness, and wished to have more of my company. I replied, that I neither liked their hours, their style, nor their manners;

ners ; and I wished to keep at a civil distance.

“ Ah !” said Lord A——, “ you know too well how to keep those you do not like at a distance.”

“ That is better, my lord, than being too obtrusive and familiar.”

“ No danger of that from you, Madam ; but much to those who aspire to your friendship, without sufficient merit to deserve it.”

Darnford blamed me for being so shy, and so hard to be pleased.

The gentlemen did not leave me till twelve o'clock, though I gave them many hints that it was time ; and that I thought it cruel to keep servants up late, especially those that worked hard all the day.

Lord A—— hoped I would return their visit soon. I curtsied, and was silent.

Darnford called upon me most days : he brought me game, and shewed me as much
attention

attention as when he was courting me for a wife.

I felt pity and concern for him. "If," said I, "this man's understanding is not strong enough to shew him the errors of his conduct, perhaps he is more to be pitied than blamed; and yet, by the same way of reasoning, one might excuse and extenuate every fault men can be guilty of. Right and wrong may be known by almost every degree of understanding; and every man may know and practise the great duties of morality, and the social and domestic virtues."

Lord A—— sent a card by Mr. Darnford, requesting me to fix a day to dine at the cottage, and to name my own hour.

I accepted this compliment, because I intended to avail myself of it, by not going as often as he should invite me: I therefore named the hour of three.

Lord

Lord A—— received me with politeness and respect. He wished I would eat with them often: poor Darnford complained that I kept him at a great distance, and wished to enjoy my company more frequently.

I wished that poor Darnford had more prudence than to make Lord A—— his confidant, especially in what concerned me; but I must be the more cautious.

After the first visit, I was urged to go to the cottage almost every day. I exhausted all my stock of contrivances to evade it, and at length was obliged to give a positive denial. Darnford argued, persuaded, wheedled; but all to no purpose.

I was invited to meet Lord A—— and Mr. Darnford at the Hall. I made the same rule of conduct; to go once, that I might not seem to slight their favours, but not to go a second time.

I heard,

I heard, that Mrs. Frampton said I was an odd kind of woman; I was so reserved, she could get nothing out of me, and that I was very affected and conceited; that Mr. Darnford was a very genteel and agreeable man, and that Lord A—— was charming and delightful.

Miss Frampton drest at him, and played and sung; and her mother displayed all her accomplishments to no purpose. The cruel man shewed no signs of admiration or attention; he did not deign to flatter or compliment; he was dumb, blind, and insensible; he seemed devoted to the sports of the field, and Beauty spread her nets in vain.

I copied some rare and curious drawings. I worked embroidery with my pupils: I contrived to have them shewn to the Framptons, and offered to be sold, as the works of an Italian artist and his wife.

They

They bought them at a good price; they took down those done by the Miss Framptons, and put these up in their places.

Afterwards, they told all that had not seen the others, that they were done by Miss Frampton, and the former ones by the younger daughters.

Lord A—— was obliged to leave the cottage sooner than he intended: he offered it to Darnford, who was to stay there till either my lord returned, or else till he went to town, and then he would let him know.

Darnford tried all his powers of persuasion to induce me to go to him at the cottage; but I was firmly resolved against it: I strove to make him sensible of the impropriety of it; but his *nonchalance* was equal to my inflexibility, and neither could convince the other.

He grew tired of living alone at the
cottage,

cottage, though he was always a welcome guest at the Hall.

He saw me almost every day, and I never refused him my company. He reproached me for the coldness of my behaviour, and I set against it the absurdity of his.

One morning early, I was surprized by a letter that informed me he had left the country, and I might direct to him at A—— House in London.

What I could not prevent, I submitted to; and I expected nothing but a continuation of folly and misfortune.

Darnford wrote me several letters: I answered them very briefly. He told me, I no longer loved nor cared for him: I replied, that when he should forsake his vanities and follies, and live like a man of reason and principle, he should find an affectionate and faithful wife in me; that I should not cease to pray for that time, nor to
make

make his honour and interest mine upon all occasions.

He went to London in November; the Framptons in December.

I employed my time in reading, writing, drawing, and needle-work.

I grew fond of gardening; and, amidst my various avocations, the days were too short for me. I visited nowhere but at the rector's, and at a gentleman farmer's in the same parish. I had been skirmishing with Poverty at a distance for some time, and preparing for her nearer approach. I tried the experiment of selling my little works of fancy; and found it would do as an aid, but not as an entire support.

I had monies by me, which I carefully kept as resources; and I would not allow myself to spend a penny idly, for I made no doubt I should have calls enough upon me in future.

Darnford

Darnford wrote me word, that he had been very ill: that he came home late in a heavy shower of rain; that he had caught cold, and had a good deal of fever. Lord A—— was out of town at the time; that he sent for his lordship's apothecary to attend him, and he was now getting better; that he wanted money to pay the apothecary's bill, and if I could spare him some, he should be obliged to me.

I had long expected this demand, and was prepared for it. I sent him a bank note for ten pounds. I was convinced, that if I sent him more, he would squander it away, and that small sums were best for him.

He thanked me for it, as if it was more than he expected from me.

One morning, the 10th of February, when I came down to breakfast, I found two letters upon my table; one under

a cover

a cover from Lord A——, the other a post letter.

The first contained two letters that follow here—

“ MADAM,

“ I AM concerned to be the messenger of bad tidings. At my return to town, I found Mr. Darnford under confinement, within the rules of the Court of King’s Bench. His creditors have made repeated applications for payment; they laid in wait to arrest him; but, by advice of an attorney, he has thrown himself into a place of personal security. I have lent him money at different times to a considerable amount; and am advised not to go any farther, as there is no likelihood of repayment. I send his dinner every day from my own table, and will perform every act of friendship that prudence will allow. I am sorry, for your sake, that there is no better prospect before you;

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but

but you will not permit me to be your friend. By desire of Mr. Darnford I send the enclosed; and am, Madam, your most humble servant,

“A——.”

“DEAR FANNY,

“I AM sorry to inform you, that my creditors have been very urgent with me to settle accounts with them. I have consulted an attorney, and he has advised me to live within the rules of the King's Bench, and so to keep them at bay till I can pay them. I am here, and very ill beside: if you were with me, I should be more comfortable; but I have no reason, nor no right, to expect it. I confess, that I only am to blame, and that you deserve a better lot: however, if you would be so good as to come to me, it would be very kind indeed; but do as you think best, and I will resign to my unhappy fate.

“Lord

“ Lord A—— is my best friend; he visits me, and sends me every day provisions from his own table, and bids me hope for better days. Let me hear from you, if I cannot see you; and believe me always, yours most affectionately,

“ GEORGE DARNFORD.”

“ MADAM,

“ I HOPE you are prepared for misfortunes, which threaten to be of no short duration. Your husband has thrown himself into the rules of the King’s Bench; and his creditors will not accept of any thing short of the full payment of all his debts. I make no doubt, that you will be urged again to give up your settlement, in order to set him free; and I fear you will not have courage enough to refuse it. If you come to town, call upon me, and don’t scruple to consult me on any occa-

sion; I shall always give you my advice freely, and you may command my best services. Bear up, and take courage; Heaven will support and reward those virtues which it permits to be the most severely tried: I am convinced of your merit, and of your fortitude, and that you will come out like pure gold, that is tried and purified seven times in the fire. I am always, dear Madam, your faithful friend and servant,

“D—— M——.”

These letters did not overset me: my mind seemed to collect itself, and to bear up against evils which it had not deserved, and could not avoid.

I sat down immediately, and wrote to my husband—

“DEAR MR. DARNFORD,

“You have a right to call upon me to come and share your troubles, as I have shared in your prosperity. It is
my

my duty to attend you, to nurse, to comfort and support you. Expect me in a few days, not to condemn or reproach you, but to perform all the most tender offices of love and friendship, and to convince you that I am, most truly, your affectionate and faithful wife,

“ F. DARNFORD.”

I put this letter into a cover directed to Lord A——, and wrote a very brief note as follows—

“ MY LORD,

“ I THANK you for the information you have given me, and beg the favour of you to send the enclosed to Mr. Darnford without delay. I am your lordship's most humble servant,

“ F. DARNFORD.”

I thought it unnecessary to write to Mr. M——, as I hoped to see him shortly.

I sent my letter to the post, and then packed up my clothes and linen; and the day following my servant went with me to N——, and we went in the stage to London the day after.

When we arrived at the inn, I took a hackney-coach, and went directly to the King's Bench rules. I enquired the way; and, after some difficulties, found out the place where my husband was, in a sorry lodging, and laid upon a bed.

I got a porter to carry my portmanteau, and my servant carried her own box. I lost no time till I found Mr. Darnford.

He was so surprized at my expedition, that he hardly believed his own eyes. He received me with transports of joy: he called me his good angel, his only love, his only treasure. I was too good, and he could never deserve or repay my kindness.

I desired him to be composed; I was
come

come to share his lodgings, but he must tell me where to get a bed for my servant. I sent for the landlady. Darnford told her I was his wife; he asked her to provide a bed for the servant, which she promised to do.

I desired her to procure us some refreshment. Darnford sat down with me, and ate a few mouthfuls: he drank a glass of wine; his eye was brightened, his countenance cheered, and he seemed another man.

I had brought sheets with me, and aired them before I put them up. When my maid had taken some refreshment, I assisted her in making the bed, and putting the room into some order, for Darnford had only a casual attendant.

I sat down, and was conversing with my husband, when Lord A—— entered the room. He seemed like one thunderstruck; he could not speak presently.

Darnford cried out—"Here she is, my best and dearest treasure! You said, she would not come; but she is better than you or I could conceive. I have her now, and I will never more part with her."

Lord A—— coloured; he looked uneasy; he tried to assume a more chearful aspect, but it was not easy nor natural.

"I rejoice to see you, Madam. I was surprized; I did not think you could have been here so soon: this is kind, indeed!"

"I am only performing my duty, my lord: there is no merit in it; for it was likewise my inclination to attend my husband."

"Mrs. Darnford cannot possibly lodge here," said my lord.

"Indeed I can, and will, my lord: wherever my husband lodges, I chuse to be."

"That was not always the case, Madam."

"It is the case now, my lord: I come

to nurse him, and I trust that office to no other hand."

Darnford gazed at me with unusual tendernefs: he grasped my hand, and looked with an air of triumph.

Lord A—— looked confused and gloomy; and I could not think what ailed him.

He soon left us, as if to conceal his uneasiness. Darnford spoke highly of his friendship and affection. I said, we must consider whether his actions would prove them; for my part, I was not convinced that we owed him any obligation, but I would not just then enter upon the subject.

I shared my husband's homely bed; and we slept more comfortably than we had ever done in Lord A——'s palace, "*with all appurtenance and means to boot.*"

Darnford was full of acknowledgments

for my coming: he had not been so happy a long time.

“ If my company really contributes to your happiness, it is in your power to have it constantly.”

“ Certainly I wish it, and would do any thing to obtain it from you.”

“ I will shew you the only way. Give up your expectations and dependance upon Lord A——; go with me into the country, and live in a cottage: I will love you better than ever I did, and study to make you happy; I will decorate our little cottage, and make it a paradise.”

“ But, how is it possible, when I dare not stir beyond the Rules?”

“ I will make it practicable. I will give up my settlement voluntarily, which I refused upon compulsion. We will live upon the rent of Darnford Hall; and, if any thing more is wanting, these hands shall furnish the means for it. It will be my

my honour, and my pride, to reclaim from ruin the man whom Heaven has made my partner and companion for life."

He seemed to reflect upon what I had said: it seemed to give him pain.

"Oh, Fanny! what have you said?— Give up Lord A——! my patron, friend, and benefactor! the man upon whom all my future hopes depend!"

"The man who has led you into the path of ruin; into dissipation, extravagance, gambling; and who has now got you into fool's paradise."

"Give up Lord A——, leave London, and bury myself in obscurity!"

"Better than being buried in sloth and slavery. Oh, Darnford! think that Heaven speaks by me; that it warns you of the dangers that surround you; that it once more shews you the path of peace. If you slight the offer, it may never again come

in your way. Consider well; for, perhaps, your fate depends upon your answer."

He was silent. He walked backwards and forwards in the room. His complexion, which used to indicate health and cheerfulness, was now grown fallow and unhealthy; his body emaciated; and his step weak and tremulous.

The tears trickled down my cheeks, my bosom heaved with sighs, to see the alteration.

I urged his health as a motive; I said, that the country air, sobriety, and temperance, would restore his health, and his morals: he would see, that happiness did not depend upon affluence and luxury, but upon peace of mind, and health of body; that more real happiness was to be found among the middling and lower degrees of men, than among those distinguished by rank, title, or fortune.

I spoke

I spoke with earnestness, till my voice faltered. Darnford saw me affected: he came and embraced me.

“ Oh, my Fanny! what can I do?”

“ Comply with my proposal. You ought to accept it with transport, instead of reluctance.”

“ Oh how can I promise what, I fear, I shall not perform!”

“ Not perform!—Then, do not promise. But, you mortify and distress me. I have only one more argument to urge. If you decline my offer, and chuse to remain in your present wretched and shameful situation, you will entirely forfeit my esteem and affection, and I will give you up to your fate; I will leave you to your well-chosen patron, and will seek my own fortune, and earn my bread by my own industry. This is my fixed resolution. Consider of this till to-morrow, and then give me your final answer.”

We

We were both silent for some time, and seemed afraid of speaking to each other.

I ordered stewed mutton and broth for our dinner, to be ready at three o'clock. Just as we were sitting down to it, a man, dressed like a cook, came in, followed by a servant with a basket. He set on two covers; and the servant set on two bottles of wine, with all other appurtenances of the table. When they had finished their business, they went away.

"This is from Lord A——," said Darnford; "from that generous friend, whom you desire me to renounce!"

"I do not wish you to be ungrateful, or unjust, Mr. Darnford. It would be easy for you to give such reasons for retiring as Lord A—— must approve. I should find no difficulty in appealing to him; and perhaps I may, if you will not: but I shall urge it no farther just now."

Darnford urged me to eat. I kept to
my

my mutton and broth, and did not touch either of the other dishes.

Darnford exclaimed—" Good God ! how strong some people's prejudices are !"

" Very true, Mr. Darnford. The same exclamation suits me, as well, at least, as it does you. I wish to shew you, that I can be contented with one dish, plainly drest ; and I think it best for health, as well as cheapness."

He was gloomy and uneasy.

" Will you drink a glass of wine with me ?"

" Yes, I will, notwithstanding my prejudices ; and I wish both yours and mine may be cured by time and reason."

He drank about a pint of wine, and would have drank more ; but I begged him to take care of his health, and restrain himself.

He said—" I thank you, my love, and submit to your restrictions."

" Oh,

“ Oh, that you would, Mr. Darnford! they should be only those of duty, reason, and prudence.”

Our day passed away heavily; for neither of us was pleased with the other. I urged Darnford repeatedly to comply with my proposal, but could not get a positive answer.

He received several notes in the morning, and wrote answers to them, but would not tell me from whence they came.

About three o'clock, Lord A—— came. He accosted me with his usual ease and freedom: he hoped I had recovered the fatigues of my journey. I, on my part, hoped his lordship was well; as I thought he seemed indisposed the other night. He coloured; said, he was not quite well that night, but was now perfectly so: he was come to dine with us, if I did not forbid him. I feared, it was we that were to dine with him, and was sorry to be so expensive

to

to him. He wished I would not think of such trifles, which were nothing between friends.

Between three and four, the dinner came; three covers, a soup, and two others; a boiled, and a roast, with wine, &c.

After dinner, we conversed on various subjects. Lord A—— introduced that which was next my heart: he wished we could find some means to extricate Mr. Darnford from his disagreeable situation.

I felt myself, as it were, inspired. I took the lead. I told Lord A—— of my proposal to my husband; and I called upon him to second me.

He seemed surprized. He applauded me warmly: he said, I was one of the best of wives, and of women; and that Darnford ought to think himself the most fortunate and happy of men.

“ You think, then, my lord, that he ought to promise me to perform the conditions I have mentioned.”

“ He

“ He must, he shall perform them,” said he: “ I will answer for him.”

“ Do you hear that, Mr. Darnford?” said I.

“ Yes, I do,” answered he: “ I will do whatever Lord A—— and Mrs. Darnford require of me.”

“ Then he is to go into the country with me, and to make his home there: that is the condition I make.”

“ I agree to it,” said Darnford.

Lord A—— seemed overjoyed that we were agreed; and I began to think myself mistaken, and that he was really our friend.

Lord A—— left us at nine o'clock, being engaged to spend the evening; and I was most compleatly deceived: my suspicions were lulled to sleep, and I went to bed contented and easy.

The next day, Mr. Darnford's attorney came to him several times. The writings were preparing, by which I was to give up
my

my settlement, and Darnford was to be set at liberty.

I was full of hopes, that he would be reclaimed from his follies; and, in time, would be all that I could wish or desire him to be.

The creditors and the lawyers met, and discussed the subject. The estate in Essex was to be sold as soon as I should give up my right in it: they agreed to accept it as the last dividend; and, although it should not amount to the full sum, they promised to give a discharge.

They met a second time at our shabby lodgings. Lord A—— was present. It was supposed, that the estate must be sold to a disadvantage. Darnford and I both gave up our right in it: I signed it cheerfully; but I dropt a tear upon the signature.

Lord A—— seemed affected: he rose, and held his handkerchief to his eyes.

He

He said—"Be of good cheer, Mrs. Darnford. This is a necessary thing. Better and happier days will come forwards afterwards."

"I fear not, my lord: I have now little to expect, or hope."

The estate was to be sold at Garraway's. It was advertised; and we were to wait till all was finished.

After the gentlemen were gone, Lord A——endeavoured to keep up my spirits: but I was fully sensible of the sacrifice I had made.

Lord A——promised to attend the sale, and to be a bidder: he hoped it would not be disagreeable, if he should be the purchaser.

"Surely not!" said Darnford. "I had rather it should fall into your lordship's hands, than any man's living."

I said nothing: it was a matter of perfect indifference to me.

The

The day came when the estate was sold. Lord A—— was the purchaser.

He came to us with joy in his countenance. He took a hand of each of us—
“The estate is in the hands of your friend; he has given a fair price for it; your creditors are satisfied; and you will soon be released from this odious place. I wish you would come to my house; but I know Mrs. Darnford’s scruples too well to expect it. You must have a lodging till the creditors have signed the releases; and then you will go whither you please.”

“Darnford, you must fulfil your promise. I have something to propose for your service, before you leave town. At present, I only call to tell you these particulars. I am engaged to-day, but will dine with you to-morrow. Farewel!”

He beckoned Darnford. He followed him out.

When

When he returned, he looked thoughtful and uneasy.

I asked him, whether he had heard any thing to vex him. He said, nō; nothing but what he knew before.

I questioned him farther, but could get nothing from him, though he was still uneasy.

Lord A—— sent word, that he should dine with us at half an hour past three. I begged of Mr. Darnford to tell him, I desired he would not alter his hours in compliment to me; that I knew he usually dined at a late hour, and I could sup very well at his hour of dinner.

“ You may tell him so yourself, my dear,” said he: “ you will have the same opportunity.”

“ Darnford, there is something that dwells upon your mind: I wish you would tell it me at once. I expect nothing good; and, I hope, am prepared for the worst.”

He

He paused — hesitated — and then —
“No,” he said, in a drawling way; “nothing to vex you, I hope, my dear.”

Lord A—— did not come till the dinner was served up, by his own order, as usual. He looked gay and elevated, but a little hurried.

I told him what I had before said to Darnford. He said, his hours were always adapted to those of his friends, and begged me to say no more upon the subject.

After dinner, I asked, whether I might not look about for a lodging: I hoped Mr. Darnford would soon be at liberty.

Certainly he would, my lord said; but I might as well stay here a few days longer.

I answered, that I cared not how soon I left London, and reminded Darnford of his promise.

He had not forgot it; he did not want to be reminded of it—“I will go into the country, if you insist upon it.”

“I do

“ I do insist on it.”

“ Well, I will keep my word ; but I will not promise to live there always : I will not be a prisoner, Madam.”

“ The promise runs, that you shall make it your home, Sir. I do not mean to make you my prisoner, nor to hinder you from going wherever you have a proper call.”

“ Very right, Madam,” said my lord : “ I hope to be able to settle this point for you. Darnford shall go down with you into the country. There is a house ready to receive you. I offer you my cottage : I will either give it, or lend it, or let it to you—which of them will best satisfy Mrs. Darnford’s unreasonable scruples ; and I will never come there but when you shall invite me.”

“ My lord, I cannot accept it : you know I have often declined it. We are already under too many obligations to you ; and I cannot, will not, encrease them : I will not go to the cottage.”

“ You

“ You will not receive an obligation from your friend! Surely, there is more pride than principle in this refusal, Madam?”

“ Perhaps there may: but it is a pride I will never part with; a pride that you cannot but approve in your heart, whatever circumstances may induce you to speak against it.”

He coloured, and looked confused. He rose, and walked to the window: he seemed to be trying to harden his heart.

He then came to me, and renewed his attack. He kneeled to me; he took my hand in both his. I observed that he trembled. He urged every argument to make me accept his offer: he disclaimed all kind of obligation; it was he that should be the obliged person, and he would study to return the obligation.

I wrapped myself in my integrity, and remained inflexible.

At length, he grew angry; he talked of obstinacy and ingratitude. Darnford kept a sullen silence; but looked uneasy and confused.

“Why do not you speak for me, Darnford?—Speak, as becomes the husband and the master.”

He was still silent.

“Well, Sir, I leave you to use your influence with your wife. I have put you into a way to fulfil your promise to her; and now, I insist upon your performing YOUR PROMISE TO ME!” He took his hat, and went out of the room, with resentment in his countenance: he did not bow to either of us, and he clapped the door after him.

“What is the meaning of this behaviour, Mr. Darnford?—What promise have you made to my lord?”

“Be composed, my dear; I will tell you by and by; you are now too much affected.”

“Affected,

“Affected, indeed!—Oh! God, support me!” I burst into tears.

Darnford drank two or three glasses of wine, as fast as he could pour them down: he brought a glass to me, and begged me to drink it.

My indignation rose: I dashed the glass out of his hand, and broke it.

He stared at me, but did not speak; he went to the table, and drank more wine.

“What mean you, Sir? to intoxicate yourself and me, in order to suppress your feelings?—Tell me all that you have to say, at once; for I can no longer endure the agony of suspicion and suspense. Speak now; or I will leave you, and never see your face again!”

“I will, presently: be composed, then, and I will.”

I took the bottle from him; he seized another, and he looked flushed and furious. He seized that in my hand: I was

terrified; I retreated to the window; I sat down, and shed torrents of tears.

He tried several times before he could speak plainly—"I have to tell you, that it is in your power to make yourself and me happy, and restore us to ease and affluence."

"Tell me the means, Sir; but look that they be honest ones, or else they will make an everlasting breach between us!"

He went on—"The estate lately sold will be again settled upon you and yours; the cottage will be given to me unconditionally; and, because you have scruples about accepting an apartment at my lord's, a lodging will be taken for us both, while we stay in London; and, whenever you please, I go with you to the cottage."

"These are the proposals you have to make me! and this is the promise you made to Lord A——! You did well to
stupidify

stupidify yourself with wine, before you explained yourself, otherwise you could not have supposed I should accept them."

"You must accept them, my dear; we have no other resource."

"Speak on, Sir: say, the conditions of this obligation?"

"Why, only that you should be generous—and kind—and grateful to Lord A——."

"I believe, I understand you. Base—unworthy—unprincipled man! I cannot find words to express my resentment. After having made away a noble fortune, you can reduce your wife to indigence, and then sell her, as your last resource!"

"No such thing, my dear: I would not part with you for the world."

"What, then, would you share me with another?—More and more base and shameful!"

"Now, don't be so angry! I would

not part with you; I would live with you, and preserve your reputation: nobody would dare to wag a finger against you, while I supported you; and, if I winked at some liberties between you and my friend, who could blame you?"

"Lord A—— is a master in contrivance; that I allow. He has made this infamous proposal through you, in order to render you perfectly contemptible in my eyes; and he has succeeded. If I were inclined to listen to his proposals, the first article should be, that you should never more come in my sight."

"Now, you are very unreasonable, Fanny; but you know better. I am your husband, and your master, and you shall live with me, and you shall do as I please, and go where I please. So it don't signify talking any more; for I am tired and sleepy, and—and—" He gaped, and nodded, and fell back in his chair.

I prayed

I prayed to God to give me courage and resolution. Now, one effort for liberty ! for virtue ! for virtuous poverty !

I called my maid : I bade her go up stairs with me. I packed up my clothes, and put on my riding-dress ; I made my servant do the same. I bade her call a hackney-coach ; she had the luck to get one soon. I made the coachman help her to carry the portmanteau down stairs, and to put that and her box into the coach.

I left Darnford in a sound sleep : I prayed that God would give him repentance, and a sober mind.

I then stepped into the coach with my maid, and bade the coachman drive to the inn from whence the N—— coach set out.

My agitation supported my spirits ; I hardly knew where I was, when I arrived

at the inn. I asked for two places, and luckily secured them.

I ordered a bed, and threw myself upon it in my clothes; and bade my maid lie down by my side. Happily, my fatigue served me in lieu of an opiate; and I slept till we were called to rise for the coach.

I found myself greatly refreshed, and set out cheerfully on my return to peace and the country.

While I was on my journey, the various objects amused me; but, when I came to the inn, and was in a state of rest, a torrent of reflections poured in upon me, and awoke the pain in my heart. My husband, by his base conduct, had made a divorce between us; I had no longer a friend, or protector, in him; I had no resource for myself; without friend or fortune, what was to become of me?

Lord A—— had justified all my fears of him; the mask was taken off: I saw a regular

regular plan of conduct, that was to end in my ruin. I was out of his reach at present; but, after all the pains he had taken for me, it was not likely that he should give up the pursuit: I had, therefore, still reason to fear his machinations. I must not stay at Mr. Moyle's; I must seek some other asylum, where neither my husband nor his patron were likely to find or to pursue me.

My maid observed, that I looked very ill; she begged me to take some refreshment; she feared I had met with something to vex me. I told her, she guessed truly; but I would strive to overcome it. I ordered something for her and myself, and took enough to support nature.

I went to bed early, and spent a miserable night in reflections upon my melancholy situation.

Want of rest made me rise early. I went out, and walked about the town:

the streets were empty, and the inhabitants were at rest. "They are free from those cares that oppress me," said I, "The husbands protect their wives, instead of betraying them; and the wives repose securely in their bosoms!"

There is an Italian proverb, that says, "The tongue will strike against the hollow tooth." The adage holds true: people oppressed with sorrow, apply every thing they see and hear to their own sufferings.

I saw, at an inn, a printed advertisement, that a broad-wheeled waggon was to set out, at ten o'clock, for J——, to carry goods and passengers. I enquired, whether two places could be had? It was to pass through our village, and to stop at the public-house there. I took two places, and then hastened back to the other inn.

I wakened my maid, and made her
dress,

dress, and breakfast; meanwhile, I told her how we were to go home. The poor girl wept.

“Oh, my dear lady!” said she, “times are changed indeed, when you go home in a stage-waggon!”

“They are so, my good Hannah; but let us keep up our spirits, for they must support us under our troubles. I shall no longer want a servant to attend me; but you shall stay with me, till you can meet with an eligible place.”

“I would serve you for nothing, Madam, rather than any other lady for great wages. I hope you will live to see better days; and, when you are able, you shall pay me what you think I deserve.”

“I thank you, my good girl; your fidelity cheers my heart; but, indeed, I have no hope of better days: all my fortune is gone; and I must, perhaps, seek a service for myself.—Don’t weep, my

girl; you weaken my heart, and I wish to harden it. Go, and get a porter to carry our baggage to the inn; and, as soon as he comes, we will go: let us lose no time."

When she was gone, I wept, and found myself relieved.

She soon came back; and we went to the inn, and took our places in the waggon.

There were several merry and happy mortals among us: they laughed, and sung; my poor Hannah and I wept, and were silent.

After a few hours, the waggon stopped in sight of our village. We got out here, and ordered our baggage to be left at the public-house, and I would send for it.

We got home by Mr. Moyle's dinner-time; and I was welcomed by all the family.

Mrs. Moyle and her daughters enquired
after

after Mr. Darnford. I said, he was better in health, but ruined in his circumstances. That he was in hopes of a place, and therefore he staid in London; but I chose to return to the country.

After our greetings, I retired to my apartment, and to my painful reflections. I thought on the surprize Darnford must have felt at my escape. Perhaps, he might chuse to call it an elopement. Perhaps he might expose me, and himself, in the public papers: this thought terrified me; and I resolved to write to him, in order to prevent it. I did so immediately.

“SIR,

“THE infamous proposal which wine encouraged you to make me, has cancelled all ties between us, and made an eternal separation. I did not think myself safe with you, and therefore made my escape while you were in a state of intoxication, and in a lethargic sleep in consequence.

SCHOOL FOR WIDOWS.

sequence. I warn you to beware how you mention to any one what passed between us; otherwise, I will expose you to the world in your true colours.

“ I leave you to pursue your own measures. You are worthy of the patronage of your noble friend, and he of such a parasite. I leave you to each other.

“ I am seeking an asylum in the arms of virtuous poverty! I have no doubt of earning my livelihood, and my slumbers will not be broken by the reproaches of guilt. This state I prefer to all that affluence and luxury can give me.

“ I came to London to do you service, and you have requited me by the basest ingratitude. May God give you repentance! and may it be soon enough to be of any benefit to you. Farewel, for ever!

“ F. D.”

The next question was, how to send it? Under cover to Lord A——? Should

I say

I say any thing to him? Why not? I had done nothing to be ashamed of. Perhaps he might think that Darnford connived at my escape, and deprive him of his protection. Perhaps he might throw him into prison, for he was still in debt to him. At last, I resolved to write a few words under the cover—

“ MY LORD,

“ I AM now, God be praised! in a place of peace and safety. Lest you should think Mr. Darnford connived at, or allowed of my escape, I think it proper to tell you, that he served you too faithfully, and that he threatened to oblige me to comply with your infamous proposal. Your lordship’s schemes have at length succeeded. You have rendered my husband despicable in my eyes, and effected an eternal separation between us. In this, if your heart will permit you, you may triumph; but the other part of your designs, I trust, will

will never be compleated. God will give me grace, to prefer virtuous poverty to guilty affluence, as long as he gives me life and reason.

“ I have only to request you to give the enclosed letter to your friend ; and tell him, I never desire to see again his handwriting, or yours.

“ F. D.”

I felt a kind of satisfaction after writing these letters. I am afraid there was a degree of revenge in it. I enjoyed the uneasiness the two friends had felt on my account ; and I was gratified by letting them see, that I despised them, and all their machinations.

I told Mrs. Moyle and her daughters, that I was reduced to a state of poverty ; that I was, moreover, persecuted by an enemy ; and that it was necessary for me to leave her house, and to conceal myself in some obscure place, where I was not known, for a time ; that, if I should here-

after

after be enabled to emerge from this situation, I would return to them, in preference to any other place; and I begged them to enquire after such a situation for me.

They were greatly concerned. Mrs. Moyle took pains to convince me, that I should be safer under her roof than any where else. I said, being so well known in this village, it was impossible for me to be concealed in it,

She gave way reluctantly; and I was obliged to be resolute, in order to persuade her to look out for another situation.

In a week's time, she told me that a servant, who formerly lived with her, had married an husbandman in an obscure village; that he was the bailiff, or over-looker, of a farm for another man, and lived in a decent kind of farm-house; and, she believed, would be very glad to take a boarder.

I thanked her for the intelligence, and
began

began to contrive how I should get thither.

Mr. Moyle kept a kind of chaise-cart, which was at that time exempted from the taxes, before the long arm of Power had deprived the industrious farmer of this convenience. Mrs. Moyle proposed to go with me to visit Mrs. Styles. Her eldest son was to drive us.

The next day, we went in this manner. I told Mrs. Moyle to call me by the name of *Smith*, and begged her son to be cautious of mentioning me by any other.

It was a tiresome journey, through bad roads; and I was glad to get to a resting-place. The house was decent, the mistress was civil, and we agreed upon terms.

I would fain have staid here, and let my baggage be sent after me; but Mrs. Moyle urged me so warmly and tenderly to return with her, that I could not refuse her. She said, her daughters would break their hearts,

hearts, if they were not to see and take leave of me ; and poor Hannah would think it hard to be discharged by any other person than myself. I consented to return, and told Mrs. Styles to expect me one day in the following week : so we were jumbled back in the same manner we came.

Mr. Moyle's family shewed every mark of affection and concern to part with me ; and Hannah wept incessantly.

I thanked them for their affection and fidelity. I begged them not to weaken my heart by their tenderness ; that I found this parting too painful to myself, beside other burthens which I must bear.

I set about packing up my cloaths and linen, and preparing for my departure. In looking over some writings, I found a paper, with these words written upon it—
 “ MY DEAR FATHER'S LAST GIFT.” This was a welcome treasure ; for I had forgotten

gotten it, my mind had been so much engaged by the alterations in my circumstances.

I began to lay plans for employing it in some way of business, and in a scheme that I shall explain hereafter. I bought a plain stuff gown, to wear in common; and took two calico ones, to wear occasionally.

I begged Mrs. Moyle to let me leave all the best of my cloaths at her house, and also the furniture of my apartment, till I should be settled in some way of life.

She gladly consented; saying, she would keep them as an earnest of my return. I paid for my board and lodging, and also my servant's wages.

These good people would fain have had me remain in their debt; but I would not consent. I had never wanted money, having saved most of what I had received since I married; and now I found the benefits of my frugality.

I visited,

I visited, and took leave of, the worthy rector and his family. I told him of my reduced circumstances; and that I was going a long journey to visit a friend, and it was uncertain when I should return. I thanked them for all their civilities, and prayed for their welfare and happiness.

I took a friendly leave of all my neighbours, and had the pleasure to find myself beloved, and my departure regretted, by all the village.

I settled a method of intercourse with Mrs. Moyle. She was to send any letters to me, under cover, directed to *Frances Smith*, to be left at an inn at B——; and Mrs. Styles's servant was to fetch them on a market-day, and to carry mine in the same manner.

Two days before I left Mrs. Moyle, a letter came from J——, directed to me. Lord A—— had used the art to get a friend to direct the cover, lest I should
return

return it unopened. The contents as follow—

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ NOTHING was ever so welcome as your letter, notwithstanding it's severity; because it brought the good tidings of your health and safety. Never were two poor devils so wretched as Darnford and me, at your cruel and abrupt departure. We feared that you were fallen into greater dangers than those you wished to avoid, which were merely ideal and imaginary. We were half distracted; we had no clue to trace you by; we feared every possible evil; but, thanks to Heaven! you are well, and in charming spirits, though you spend them unmercifully upon those who love you best, because they best know your value; and one of whom would spend half of his fortune to obtain the return of your friendship and confidence.

“ Darnford

“ Darnford is very ill : he drinks too much wine ; I tell him so ; and I take the bottle from him, and preach temperance every day. Now you are found, I hope he will be easier, and take care of his health. We conclude you are at Moyle’s : we beg you to continue there. We promise that you shall not be interrupted. Do not go farther, out of any fears that your fancy may suggest. I know the respect due to you too well to offend you by intruding upon you ; and I will convince you, in spite of your prejudices, that I am not unworthy of your friendship. Darnford is afraid of you : he dares not write, after your prohibition. I am bolder, because it is in my power to prevent your suffering what most people think an evil ; and which you, in a cooler moment, will, I hope, be convinced of, and will suffer your friends to preserve you from it.

“ Lady B—— is gone with her lord to
the

the south of France; and from thence she goes to Italy. She desired me to present her compliments, and to send you the enclosed; which I have now performed.

“ Darnford says, he loves you better than himself; and wishes incessantly for your company, and your assistance.

“ Let us hear from you soon. Tell us, that you are well; that you forgive our attentions to your ease and interest, and our efforts for your happiness.

“ Your friend and servant,

“ A——.”

I make you a present, my friend, of this fine letter. You will draw many inferences: I shall only offer one—It is a generally received opinion, that Virtue is bold, and Vice timid. This may be true in some cases; I can only say, that I have seen the contrary in every case that has come within my knowledge: that Virtue
has

has been timid, and wanted help to support her own innocence ; and Vice assured and impudent, so as to stagger those who judge only from appearances.

I offered to hire a cart, to carry myself and my baggage ; but Mr. Moyle would insist upon my accepting his vehicle. His son offered to drive me ; and my old pupil, Betsey, gave me her company, and would stay a fortnight with me, till I was used to the place and the people.

When Betsey left me, I seemed to be quite alone, and felt as if I was placed at the world's extremity. I was, for the first time, among people I could not converse with, and also was obliged to do many things that I was unaccustomed to ; but the thought that I was in my duty, made them easy and pleasant to me.

I now recollected a great omission I had been guilty of : I had neither called upon, nor written to, my worthy friend, Coun-

fellor M——. I wished to consult him upon my present situation, and future establishment. I had leisure enough to repair my fault ; and I sat down, and wrote to him—

“ SIR,

“ I AM afraid you will set me down in your list, as unjust and ungrateful ; but I shall endeavour to acquit myself of this charge. My time and attention have been so much engrossed by my husband's ill health and unfortunate situation, that I could think of nothing else. I have acted against your advice and injunction ; and therefore I have hardly the courage to address you now.

“ I could not see my husband sick, and under confinement, without doing every thing in my power to set him at liberty. I could not be rich myself, and suffer him to be poor, and a prisoner. You expect that

I should

I should have acted thus, and are prepared to allow for it.

“ Mr. Darnford is in London, and in expectation of getting a place by the interest of his friends. London does not agree with my health, or my principles: I have therefore determined to seek my fortune in another way.

“ I have, for some time past, been preparing for what has happened, and endeavouring to qualify myself for gaining a livelihood by my industry and ability.

“ I have thoughts of opening a feminary of female education; and I beg your advice as to the place and manner which may be the most eligible, and the most likely to succeed. I have sketched out several plans of this kind, which I shall lay before you; and I have found out means to put one into execution.

“ The last time I ever saw my dear father, he gave me a noble present; and he

bade me save it for some future exigency. I have saved great part of the monies I have received; but I take no merit in reserving this; for, in truth, I had forgotten that I had such a sum that I could strictly call my own. With this I can furnish a house. I have, beside, some furniture at Mr. Moyle's; and I think I may open a school with as good an expectation as most others have done,

“ I depend upon your advice and patronage before any other. Let me hear from you soon. Direct to me at Mr. Moyle's, as usual. I am, dear Sir, your obliged friend and servant,

“ F. DARNFORD.”

I had brought a good many books with me to Styles's; and I found, in reading and writing, a resource against my misfortunes.

I should have told you, that Lady B—— sent me a charming letter, under Lord

A——'s

A——'s cover, and a note for fifty pounds, which she said was before my own; and desired me to write, and send my letters through Lord A——'s hands. She little thought of the part he had acted.

I spent three months in this retirement. It was not pleasant, but use made it tolerable to me. I hoped one day to emerge, and to mix with conversible people; the want of which made my greatest trouble, especially of an evening, when my mind was tired of reflecting.

In the month of August, I received the following letter—

“MADAM,

“By desire of Mr. Darnford, I write to inform you, that he is very ill, and is thought to be in a decline. Dr. H—— attends him; and my lord does every thing in his power for his recovery. He begs the favour of you to write a few

words to comfort him, and to say that you forgive him for his behaviour when you were last with him. He does not wish you to come to him, for reasons that, he says, you know without his telling them. I write without my lord's knowledge; and therefore, Madam, if you write to Mr. Darnford, send it under cover to me, at Lord A——'s. I am, Madam, your humble servant,

“ JAMES COVELL,

“ UNDER BUTLER TO LORD A——.

“ You may get some person to direct your letter for you.”

I was concerned, but not surprized, at the contents of this letter. I wrote an answer; and sent it, by a special messenger, to the post at J——.

“ I AM very much concerned, Mr. Darnford, to hear of the bad state of your health; but I am pleased to find, you
think

think that your faults stand in need of forgiveness.

“ I dare not flatter, nor deceive you; but I wish to lead you to sincere repentance. I truly forgive you for all offences against myself: but you have an account to settle at an higher tribunal.

“ You have made it impossible for me to come to you at Lord A——’s; but if you will, even now, throw off your fetters, and come to me at Mr. Moyle’s, I will receive you as my husband—will nurse you with the most tender care and attention, and do every thing in my power to save your body and soul. The worthy rector of your own parish will attend you, and assist my endeavours; and we shall be proud of our penitent, and anxious to lead him into the path of virtue and of peace.

“ Let me intreat you to comply with my request. Believe that Heaven warns

you, by me, to shun destruction, and to secure your recovery.

“ Write to me, or let your friend Covell write ; and I will meet you at Mr. Moyle’s at your first notice, and will convince you that I am still

“ Your faithful wife,

“ F. DARNFORD.”

I directed as desired, and wrote in the cover these few words—

“ MR. COVELL,

“ I THANK you for your attention and humanity to my poor sick husband. I beg you to give him the enclosed directly, and to send me his answer as soon as possible. I pray Heaven to reward your kindness, and grant that you may never want a friend to repay your good offices.

“ F. D.”

I wrote

I wrote to Mrs. Moyle; I told her, that my husband was very ill, and that I had invited him into the country, for change of air. I begged her to let my bed be constantly aired, and that she would let me have a garret for a servant; and, if Hannah was not engaged, to let her know, that I should want her attendance; and, if any letters for me should come to her house, to send them immediately by a special messenger.

Having discharged this duty, I prayed incessantly for Darnford's return to me and virtue; and waited impatiently for an answer to my letters.

Ten days after my letter went to the post, I received one directed by Lord A——, and sealed with black wax. My heart foreboded the contents—

“MADAM,

“MR. DARNFORD expired two hours ago. I could not have written to you at

this solemn moment, but to ask a necessary question. I take upon me the sad task of performing the last duties to my departed friend ; which obliges me to enquire, whether you wish to have the body interred in the village where lie the remains of his ancestors, or whether I shall see it deposited in the parish where he died. I beg you will make no scruple of declaring your wishes, nor of commanding all the services of your afflicted friend and devoted servant,

“ A——.”

I was deeply affected, though not surprised, at this awful event. I gave some hours to grief and meditation.

“ Poor, unhappy man !” said I : “ Is this the end of thy career, at only twenty-nine years of age ? ”

I was awakened by the contents of the letter : it demanded an early answer. I
had

had no friend to write in my name. In spite of delicacy and disinclination, I must use the pen myself.

This was, indeed, a heavy task to me; but I could not avoid it. After some consideration, I wrote as follows—

“MY LORD,

“IT is a dreadful aggravation of my sorrows, to be obliged to address you at this time: yet, your attention to your deceased friend calls for my acknowledgement. I leave the circumstances attending the last duties entirely to your lordship. Oh, my lord! Death is an awful preacher! may he touch your heart properly, and lead you to reflection upon mortality, which is the certain lot of all men; and to a timely preparation for it! Which is the wish and prayer of

“F. DARNFORD.”

When the confusion of my thoughts was somewhat abated, I considered, that I

should have some points to settle with Mr. Darnford's heir; who would probably come to the Hall, to take possession of it; that no one had any right to molest me; and I might return to Moyle's, and stay there till I had settled my plan of life.

I discharged my board and lodgings. I hired a cart; and a peasant drove me back to Moyle's. The family were rejoiced to see me. I told them what had happened: they wished and hoped I would fix with them; but I had no such intention. My mind spurned the idea of living upon casual support; and I resolved to exert my abilities, and to eat the bread of industry.

I expected a letter from my friend and counsellor; and I would wait for his advice and direction.

A few days after my return to Moyle's, I received the following letter—

“MADAM,

"MADAM,

"I AM ordered, by James Darnford, Esq. to inform you, that he is the heir at law to all the effects of your late husband, George Darnford, Esq. and that he will come down to Darnford Hall within a week: also, that you have no right to take away any thing from the house aforefaid. Mr. Frampton has bought an estate in another county, with a larger house upon it, suitable to his family, and has given up his agreement to the said James Darnford, Esq. and he purposes to reside there himself. I am ordered to desire you to prepare to give an account of all the effects of the deceased George Darnford, Esq. as monies, plate, jewels, and all other effects whatsoever. I shall attend Mr. Darnford to the Hall; and then I shall wait on you. In the interim, I am, Madam,

"Your humble servant,

"ROGER RACKHAM."

This mandate gave me great uneasiness. I resolved to write again to my good counsellor; but the next day brought me a letter from him—

“ DEAR MADAM;

“ I AM not surprized at the contents of your letter. I expected, that you would be persuaded, or threatened, into such a measure; yet I cannot but wish you had held out a little longer: Providence was hastening to your assistance; and it would have been out of the power of any one to have urged you to set your hand to your own ruin. It is done, and cannot now be helped. Let us, then, look forward.

“ It gives me pleasure to find you laying plans for your future establishment: I honour and esteem you the more; but I am not willing that you should engage in any hazardous undertaking.

“ You say, that you may open a school
with.

with as good an expectation as most others. Very true: but who can assure you, that those expectations will be answered? I have known ladies, as well qualified as yourself, undertake this business, and fail of success. I have seen others, with no other requisites but conceit and assurance, succeed to admiration; and, by the help of *able assistants*, send out their pupils veneered over with external accomplishments, that strike the eyes of superficial observers more than solid virtues and principles.

“ Beside this, schools are fluctuating and uncertain; a parcel of gossips will sit in judgment upon them and their conductors. Schools are talked up, and talked down, by those who know nothing of the requisites, or the real government, of them.

“ Parents are weak and partial: in that case, they are offended that their children are excelled by others. Are there others, who are careless and indifferent toward them?

them? they will exonerate themselves of all blame, by throwing the whole of their faults upon their preceptors and governesses. The conducting a seminary of education is an arduous and laborious undertaking; it is not duly estimated, nor sufficiently rewarded. Those who devolve upon others the important charge of education, do not sufficiently consider their obligation to those who discharge it faithfully, and who are to acquit *themselves* of a most serious duty to society in general, and to their families respectively.

“ You see, my dear lady, it is easier to overthrow a plan, than it is to erect one. I will, however, try to lead you into a path, where you shall not hazard all your property; nor yet be so bound and fettered, that you cannot get away if you dislike, or are unhappy.

“ A baronet's lady has enquired for a person, properly qualified, to be a governess.

ness to two daughters, and her niece, to whom she is guardian. She asked me to recommend one. I told her, I would look out for her; and I thought it likely, that I might meet with such an one as I could honestly recommend.

“ You were in my thoughts; but I would not propose it without your knowledge and approbation.

“ Let me know, as soon as you have resolved, lest another should step in before you.

“ I shall say nothing of the late event, but that God knows what is best for us.

“ Depend upon my friendship at all times, and give me your confidence upon all occasions. I am, dear Madam, yours sincerely,

“ D—— M——.”

I wept over this letter. “ God be praised!” said I, “ I have, then, an honest and sincere friend, who scorns to flatter or deceive

deceive me. In telling me, he thinks he can honestly recommend me, he says more than flattery can. How different is the language of sincerity from that of adulation! yet, how few know the true value of it!"

M. Marivaux observes, justly—"Charity is never magnificent in its gifts, and that such are always to be suspected of some latent design: in like manner, Sincerity is always modest in its professions, and frugal of compliments."

I resolved to answer my friend's letter without delay; and to enclose Mr. Rackham's in mine.

I asked Mr. M——'s advice, in regard to him and Mr. James Darnford. I thanked him for his kindness and attention to my welfare and interest. I begged him to recommend me to the lady, and I would endeavour to deserve his credentials. I asked for a speedy answer, with his directions

tions for my behaviour to Mr. Darnford's heir.

A few days after, came a second letter from Mr. Rackham—

“MADAM,

“It is reported in town, that you have been weak enough to give up your settlement; and that the estate in Essex has been sold to pay your husband's debts. If this be true, my friend, the present Mr. Darnford, is highly injured; for this estate would have devolved to him upon your death. In that case, you cannot expect any favour from him; and I warn you, at your peril, to take any thing from off his premises.

“You must give up every thing belonging to the family, or else you must go to prison. Take your choice. Do not offer to go from Mr. Moyle's; if you do, you will be arrested. I shall be with you soon,

soon, and will tell you farther particulars. Your humble servant,

“ ROGER RACKHAM.”

I should have been terrified by this letter, but my reliance upon my friend gave me courage: I depended that he would not suffer me to be arrested, or insulted, and I despised these threatenings. I sent this letter also to him, and begged his advice and direction. I was soon put out of my pain by his answer—

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ I KNOW the fellow who sent you these impertinent letters. Do not let them frighten you. I will be with you in a few days, and will protect you from insults of every kind.

“ D. M——.”

On the third day of September I received a brace of partridges, and a note—

“ LORD

“ LORD A—— begs Mrs. Darnford's acceptance of the first birds he has shot; and desires to know when he may wait on her.”

ANSWER—“ Mrs. Darnford is much indisposed, and admits no men visitors.”

I gave a general order, to admit no man but the rector.

Mr. Rackham called, and was told, I saw no company.

Lord A—— and Mr. Rackham came again the next day, and received the same answer.

I told Mrs. Moyle, I expected a friend from London: and begged her to accommodate him with a room in her house, if possible; and to order her servants not to mention it, as it would be only for a short time.

She was so kind as to do what I desired; as, indeed, she always did.

It was my design to accompany him
back

back to London; and I was busied in preparing for my departure. My mourning for my father was nearly as good as new; I only made up a travelling dress.

On the sixth of September, my worthy friend arrived; and I received him with joy and gratitude.

He informed me, that the lady was prepared to receive me, and was now expecting me; and that I might return with him in his own carriage.

Mr. Rackham called again, a few hours after. Mr. M—— desired that he might be admitted.

He came in. He was surprized to find Mr. M—— with me.

“Sir, you know me,” said my friend; “and I know you also.”

He bowed, and looked confused.

Mr. M—— went on—“How dared you, Sir, to write two such impertinent letters to this lady?”

“Sir,

“ Sir, I beg pardon, I was acting for my client.”

“ Yes, Sir! acting the part of an incendiary—of a villain!—Go, Sir! I will speak to your client myself; I have nothing to say to you!”

He was going, but Mr. M—— called him back—“ Stop, Sir: Is Mr. Darnford at the Hall?”

“ Yes, Sir; he came last night.”

“ Then, tell him, I will wait on him to-morrow morning—And, for you, Sir, I forbid you to trouble or disturb this lady any more, at your peril! You are what a sensible writer calls—“ a worm, or maggot of the law; bred out of the rotten parts of it.” You live by stirring up strife and litigation. I shall acquaint Mr. Darnford with your character, and warn him to beware of you—And, now, you may go about your business.”

The

The man sneaked away, crest-fallen, and ashamed.

“A rascally pettifogger!” said Mr. M——. “I know him well enough: he has done some very bad actions. My eye is upon him; and, the first opportunity he gives me, I will expose and punish him.”

The next morning, after breakfast, Mr. M—— went to the Hall.

While he was gone, I received a letter from Lord A——

“I AM told, that Mrs. Darnford receives no men visitors; and I am informed that, last night, a gentleman came to Mr. Moyle’s, in his own chaise; that he was well received, and that he lodged there.

“I am farther informed, that James Darnford, Esq. came yesterday to the Hall; that he brought with him an attorney of bad character, and that they threaten to give trouble to Mrs. Darnford.

“These

“ These intelligences incite me to write to her, notwithstanding her former prohibition. Will she avow a falsehood? Will she admit one man visitor, and exclude all others?

“ This morning, I learn, that her visitor is a gentleman learned in the law; and that she consults him, in regard to the proceedings of James Darnford and his attorney. This I can allow, and approve: but I beg to be admitted to the consultation, as her friend; I have a right to expect, and to demand it.

“ Your husband, Madam, upon his death-bed, recommended you to my care and protection; he desired me to be your friend: in regard to him, you ought to permit me to perform my promise and my duty.

“ I shall be happy to meet Mr. M——, and to second every thing that he can offer for your service. I know his charac-

ter, and respect him as I ought. I will wait on you and Mr. M——, the moment you permit me; and convince him and you, that I am, Madam, your faithful friend, and humble servant,

“ A——.”

This was a vexatious and provoking letter. In appearance, it was all fair and honest friendship; and, unless I told all my reasons for avoiding Lord A——, it seemed prudery and folly to refuse his company and assistance.

I did not care to quarrel with him; and, as I was going to be out of his reach, I thought it most adviseable to be upon terms of external civility with him.

When my good friend came in, I shewed him the letter, and desired his advice how to act towards him.

“ You have refused to see him?”

“ Yes, Sir, I have.”

“ Was it on account of your widow-
hood?”

hood? or, do you mean to avoid his company in future?"

"I do: to avoid him for ever!"

"Then you will not accept any favours from him?"

"No, certainly. I would sooner receive them from the parish."

"Then, I am sure, you have good reasons for it. Your conduct has always been right hitherto, and I give you credit for it. This letter looks fair enough; but you know the man, and can judge of his honesty."

"But, Sir, he was my husband's friend; and supported him in his sickness, and paid the last duties to him."

"Well, well, I see your difficulties; I guess from whence they proceed. Suppose I was to call upon my lord, and make a kind of apology for your refusing to see him; and thank him for his polite attentions, and all those sort of things? Then

he would let us be at quiet for a few days; we should be gone, in the meantime, and then he might be pleased or angry, and nobody care for it."

"My dear Sir, you would oblige me inexpressibly by so doing. What should I do without such a friend!"

"Say no more, child. Did not I come hither to serve you? If you did not employ me, I should have come to no purpose. I will go directly."

He did so; and staid till my dinner was waiting for him.

He came in, rubbing his hands—
"Well, Madam, I have pacified my lord for the present. He is very angry that you will not see him, nor accept his offers; but I see there is more at the bottom than what appears upon the surface. Come, let us dine. I am sorry to have made you wait, but I could not get away sooner."

I thanked

I thanked him heartily for all his goodness to me.

As we sat at dinner, he kept telling me how he had managed with Lord A——.

“He was very stately with me at first: he thought it strange, that I should be admitted to visit you, and even be lodged in the house with you, while he was denied admittance to your presence. I said, there might be reasons for both.

“I should be glad to hear them,” he said.

“Why, my lord, I am an old friend of Mrs. Darnford’s family; I was her father’s executor.”

“I knew not that,” said he.

“I desired her to consult me, whenever she wanted my advice or assistance. She had received two impertinent and threatening letters from James Darnford’s attorney: she wanted me to protect her from their attacks.”

“ Very right, Sir: she is indeed obliged to you; and I thank you for assisting her.”

“ But, secondly, my lord, I am an old fellow; she can have nothing to fear from any obligation to me. Your lordship is young, handsome, and accomplished.” [I thought it right to smooth him over a little.] “ The lady is young and engaging also. Were she to be under obligations to you, her gratitude, and her sense of your merit, might put her into a dangerous and trying situation.” [He looked down, and shrunk from the touch.] “ But, supposing your lordship’s honour and her virtue to be invulnerable, the world might think otherwise of your connection: and her character, which is unquestionable, might suffer; and that would do her more injury than your assistance could do her service.”

“ He changed colour several times, and seemed uneasy in his seat.

“ He

“ He said, that, if he might be honoured by your accepting his assistance, there was no occasion for the world to take cognizance of it: things might be managed so discreetly as to conceal it from notice.

“ She could not conceal it from herself, my lord; she respects virtue, more than appearances. I think her right to decline your favours: it is from principle, not from pride or prudery.”

“ By Heaven!” said he, “ I think it is from both.”

“ Then you justify her conduct, and give a reason against yourself.”

“ He started. I came too near him: he did not recover it immediately.

“ Sir, you do not do me justice. I wish you to understand me better. I was Mr. Darnford’s *friend*: he recommended his wife to my care. But pray, Sir, tell me what Mrs. Darnford intends to do with herself?”

“As her *husband's* friend, and as her *friend*, I will tell your lordship. She has been endeavouring to qualify herself to assist others in the important department of female education. She purposes to open a school by herself, or else to be governess to one or more young ladies, in the family of their parents. I have advised the latter; because it is less laborious, and less hazardous also.”

“I cannot bear that a woman of Mrs. Darnford's merit and accomplishments should be condemned to such a degrading situation.”

“Why not, my lord? Where is the degradation? It is this active and industrious temper and mind, that makes me her friend; I love and honour her for it. Had she sat piping and whining, as many people in her situation would do, and expected Heaven to rain down riches into her lap, I should, perhaps, have pitied her;

her; but I should not have stepped forward to her assistance. Such people are ready to accept other kind of assistance, which is far more degrading. I respect that noble and independent spirit, which finds resources within itself for every thing. Heaven looks with pleasure upon a brave spirit, struggling with misfortunes, and rising above them: it's talents are exerted, it's virtues are proved, and conscious rectitude supports it with fortitude and firmness; while virtue prepares for it an eternal reward. I honour and respect Mrs. Darnford too much, to offer her pecuniary assistance; it would offend her delicacy, and my own: but I will follow her with my friendship and services, till I see she has no farther need of them."

"Oh, my generous, noble friend!" said I. "Your good opinion excites me to strain every nerve, and make every effort to deserve it!"

"Now,

“ Now, don’t interrupt me,” said Mr. M——, “ let me tell my story out—

“ I made this noble lord turn pale, and red, and pale again, in the course of our conference.

“ I rose up to come away ; but he took my hand—“ Let me intreat you, Sir, to persuade Mrs. Darnford to accept this cottage ; to live here, as the person to take care of it, with only one servant to attend her, or more, if she pleases ; in short, to live here in her own way.”

“ At your expence, my lord ?—No: I cannot persuade her ; because I think her right to refuse it.”

“ He tried every argument ; but I found means to confute them all.

“ He tried what anger would do. I was as angry as he. Then he wheedled and coaxed me. I made several efforts to leave him. I said it was your dinner-time. He urged me to dine with him ; but I refused

fused positively. Finding it was to no purpose to urge me farther, he suffered me to take a polite leave of him."

"Oh, my dear Sir! let us go to London—let us go directly!"

"Patience, my dear lady!—I shall be as glad to go as you can be, but I must first settle your affairs here.

"Your cousin, James Darnford, Esq. is a mean, shabby fellow. He talked much of his claims upon all the effects of his kinsman. I told him, there was another claimant. He seemed frightened, and asked who it was?"

"Mrs. Darnford, Sir. She has a lawful claim to one-third of all the personalities of her late husband. I will enumerate them—The goods and furniture of this house; the plate, linen, &c. the farming stock, and utensils; and the crops now upon the ground. The whole premises, with these things upon them, were

were let to Robert Frampton, Esq. for the sum of two hundred pounds *per annum*. The year's rent is due, and, I suppose, you have received it; but you must account for it to me, in behalf of Mrs. Darnford. I am her lawyer, and I demand it for her."

"Darnford, and his attorney, stood aghast. They looked at each other, and were silent.

"I went on—"I have made a kind of estimate, in my own mind, of her share of these personalities. If you will pay Mrs. Darnford the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, she will give and sign releases, and all will be settled quietly: but, if you take this fellow's advice, and go to law for it, you will spend as much, and perhaps more, than the whole is worth; and you will have to pay the costs of suit, and nobody but this man will be the better for it. I profess plain dealing. I tell you nothing but the

the truth. Consider this point, and give me your answer as soon as possible."

"Mr. Darnford talked a great deal of nonsense and impertinence, which I shall not repeat. He offered twenty, forty, fifty pounds.

"I refused to accept any thing less than my demand. I desired him to consider farther, and give me his answer to-morrow morning.

"You may have your baggage packed up, to-night, if you please: if I finish the business in the morning, we may set out for London in the afternoon; but, if otherwise, we must wait till the day after. I will draw up the releases myself, this evening, and have every thing in readiness. Get me pen, ink, and paper, for that purpose."

Thus did my generous friend act for me; and with as much activity and dispatch as possible. He wrote all the evening, and
every

every thing was ready for signing the next morning.

As soon as breakfast was over, Mr. M—— went to the Hall, with his papers in his pocket.

Some time after, Lord A——'s servant called, with his Lord's compliments, desiring to know how I did, and inviting Mr. M—— to dine with him at four o'clock.

I sent word, that Mr. M—— was gone to the Hall upon business, and would be engaged there most part of the day, and that I was much as usual.

I packed up all my mourning, cloaths, and necessaries, and had my trunk put into Mr. M——'s chaise, and was ready to go at a minute's warning. I discharged my servant Hannah; to whom I gave a written character, such as she well deserved, and such as most people would accept.

I took leave of Mrs. Moyle and her family; telling them, I should leave them
very

very soon, and begging them to say nothing of it till after I was gone.

I waited impatiently for my friend's return. At one o'clock, he sent me word, he should dine at the Hall, but would be with me by six o'clock. This I took for a hint, that he would set out with me at that hour.

Mr. M—— came back at half an hour past five o'clock.

"Well," said he, "what did you think of my staying to dine at the Hall?"

"I thought it a good omen, Sir, that you would finish the business, and that we should set out on our journey this evening."

"You guess well. Your kinsman and I understand one another; and I verily believe, that fellow instigated him, or he would not have given you any trouble. I have got the sum I demanded from him. And, pray, get all your money together; and,

and, when you get to London, you shall buy stock with it, and let it accumulate for hereafter. While you are young, I hope you shall live upon your own earnings; but, when you go down the hill, it is good to have a resource. Come, give me some tea; and I will order my servants to get ready, if you chuse to set out to-night."

"If it is not disagreeable to you, Sir, I am quite ready."

The tea was drank, the chaise was got ready, and we went as far as N—— that evening. We supped and slept there; and, the next day, we went forward on our journey.

We slept at Rumford, and got to Lincoln's Inn Fields by noon the day following.

Mr. M—— told me his management with James Darnford. I found he had pleaded my cause with that eloquence
which

which only appeared when he was warmed with his subject; for his common conversation was blunt and plain.

This excellent man took my monies, and bought into the Long Annuities for me. I believe he added to the sum; but he concealed it so cunningly, that I could not be certain of it.

He gave me the Bank securities—
“Here,” said he, “keep these safely. Twenty pounds a year is a good fortune to those who had nothing before; and you will find it a pretty addition to your salary.

“You are to have fifty pounds a year. I have settled all things for you with Lady Haughton. You shall call upon her to-morrow morning; but you must finish your week with me, before you go there entirely.”

I was going to express my gratitude and respect; but he stopped me.

"I won't be thanked, nor I won't be flattered. Be my good child, and I will be your good father: that is enough for us both."

The next morning, Mr. M—— carried me to wait on Lady Haughton. She received us in her dressing-room. The young ladies were with her.

There was an air of condescension about the lady, that had pride and insolence in it; and humiliated, while it seemed gracious to me.

The young ones whispered and laughed aside; which convinced me that they were ignorant and ill-bred, and foreboded an unpleasant task to the person who should undertake to inform and instruct them.

Mr. M—— presented me to Lady Haughton. He reminded her of what had passed between them; and told her, I was the person he recommended.

My lady gave a nod of approbation:
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the terms were mentioned, and agreed to ; and the Monday following named for my reception into the family.

Mr. M—— treated me with the greatest kindness and hospitality ; and I left him with reluctance. He would not suffer me to express half the gratitude I felt for his goodness. He took a paternal leave of me ; and I went to my new destination.

And now, my dear friend, I will make up this enormous packet. Our plough-boy will take it with him to W——. I hope to hear from you, at his return home with my Patty. I shall go on writing in the mean time.

I have kept a journal ; and that enables me to be as minute as you find me, for I have little more than to transcribe.

You must tell me some particulars of your past situation. You speak very disrespectfully of your husband, and I expect you to account for it. He has left
you

you an ample fortune, and the care of his children. This proves that he esteemed, and put confidence in you. He must have had good sense and penetration, to have understood your merit.

With every sentiment of esteem and friendship, I am, dear Madam, your faithful friend, and obedient servant,

FRANCES DARNFORD.

P.S. I will contrive a way to send my packets to W— once a month, and receive yours in return.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.

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